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ARABIA
BEFORE MUHAMMAD

BY

DE LACY O'LEARY, D.D.

Author of *Arabic Thought and its Place in History, A Comparative Grammar of the Semitic Languages*, etc.

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FOREWORD

THE main purpose of the following pages is to show that Arabia, before the coming of Islam, was not a country secluded from the cultural influences of Western Asia, nor was it entirely cut off from contact with the political and social life of its neighbours in the Near East. The result of the ancient penetration of Arabia and the intercourse of the Arabs with their neighbours was that the religion of Islam, so far from taking its rise amongst secluded desert tribes, was a natural stage of development in the religious life of West Asia; and the Arabic language, though spared some of the alien influences brought to bear upon certain other of the Semitic dialects, was very considerably affected by foreign intercourse, even in the earliest stage of which we have written records.

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ARABIA

CHAPTER I

ARABIA AND THE ARABS

(*a*) *Area of Arab Occupation*

Describing the conditions of Western Asia Bevan says: "Only part of each province *counts*. The rest is waste land—the desolation of the level desert, the desolation of the mountains . . . the belts between mountain and desert, the banks of the great rivers, the lower hills near the sea, these are the lines of civilization (actual or potential) in Western Asia. The consequence of these conditions is that through all the history of Western Asia there runs the eternal distinction between the civilized cultivators of the plains and lower hills and the wild peoples of mountain and desert. The great monarchies which have arisen here have rarely been effective beyond the limits of civilization; mountain and desert are another world in which they can get, at best, only a precarious footing. And to the monarchical settled peoples the near neighbourhood of this unsubjugated world has been a perpetual menace. It is a chaotic region out of which may pour upon them at any weakening of the dam hordes of devastators. At the best of times it hampers the government by offering a refuge and recruiting ground to all the enemies of order. Between the royal governments and the free tribes the feud is secular."[1] This is a just picture, within certain limitations. Its accuracy is mainly due to the fact that the civilization with which we are chiefly concerned in Western Asia is that known as the "river-valley culture" based on agriculture of an intensive kind which presupposes artificial irrigation fed by a river liable to periodical inundation. Such culture was necessarily limited to the levels

to which the water of the river can be raised, and consequently that level becomes the line of demarcation between the settled country and the area of the nomadic tribes. Our earliest records in Western Asia were produced by people of this river-valley culture amongst whom, apparently, the art of writing was evolved. This river-valley culture of Mesopotamia and Egypt has played a very prominent part in history and is the lineal ancestor of western civilization to-day. Still the fact remains that it was but one of several cultural types. It is still unproved that all cultural forms trace back to one source, though the tendency of recent research points strongly in that direction. So far as Western Asia is concerned Bevan's dictum holds good as applied to a continuous history which traces back to the social groups of the earlier river-valley culture. Its defect, at least in detail, is that it implies too sharp a line of demarcation between the cultured settlers in the lowlands and the wild denizens of the uplands. There was a constant drifting of the desert men into the settled area, sometimes by way of predatory incursion, but sometimes also by forming settlements where the invaders established homes side by side with the older cultivators and gradually assimilated their culture. One of the best-known instances of this appears in the invasion of Canaan by the Israelites, a confederate group of desert tribes, some of whom settled down to agriculture and formed alliances with kindred tribes who had been earlier invaders and with the older occupants of the country, in spite of warnings and exhortations by their prophets urging them to keep apart. In due cour e the pressure of Philistine aggression forced these invaders into a closer confederacy, though some of them, e.g. the Rechabite clan of the Kenites (cf. Jerem. xxxv) refused to settle down and remained pastoral nomads to a late period. This invasion appears to be fairly typical of Arab movements into the settled territory, movements which were already in progress at the dawn of recorded history and continue to the present day, sometimes

on a small scale, sometimes on a larger one. It is not easy to estimate the physiological results of such invasions. In the case of Palestine there seems reason to believe that the majority of fellaḥin of the present day are descendants of the earlier pre-Israelite and even of the pre-Semitic races. Possibly the moist climate has proved fatal to the majority of the desert invaders who have left their language and religion but have failed to leave a posterity.

Bevan speaks of the desert land as " offering a refuge . . . to all the enemies of order ". How far is this accurate ? So far as modern observation extends it is extremely rare for citizens of the settled area to seek a refuge amongst the Bedwin, save only in the case when settled Arabs become discontented with political conditions and revert to the nomadic life which they had but recently abandoned. Of this there are examples in history : the B. Bakr of Hira returned to nomadic life when the Sasanid government displaced the Arab dynasty of Hira and appointed a Persian satrap ; and the case of Terah and Abraham who went out of Ur of the Chaldees to become pastoral nomads in the Syrian desert as their ancestors had doubtless been seems another instance of the same sort. No doubt from such reversions some at least of the culture of the settled communities were carried out amongst the denizens of the desert, but this could never have been on a sufficiently extensive scale to make any deep impression.

So we take Arabia to be the land of the Arabs, the area in South-West Asia which was not brought within the scope of the river-valley culture and where consequently the inhabitants lagged behind in the evolution of cultural progress. The Arabs are marked off by economic and social conditions rather than by any geographical frontier and Arabia must be regarded as being the whole area of Arab occupation, not only the peninsula to which the name is often confined. The ancient geographers included much more than that peninsula when they spoke of

Arabia, and we must follow their example if we desire to make Arabia include the whole " land of the Arabs ".

(*b*) *The Peninsula of Arabia*

Although Arabia, the land of the Arabs, is not confined to the peninsula, that peninsula is the focus of the Arab community. In general configuration it slopes from west to east so that most of the mountains are in the west, but a group of hard rocks in the south-east, Oman, makes that an exception to the sloping lowlands of most of the coast along the Persian Gulf. There are no perennial rivers in Arabia but only *'awdiya* or *'awda'* (plural of *wadî*), valleys which fill with water during the periodical rains but remain dry at other times. In the western highlands these are often very deeply excavated ravines.

A large part of the country is desert. The desert is of three kinds: (i) *nefûd*, an area of deep sand which the wind forces into high banks or dunes: sometimes when the sand is piled in very high ridges with only narrow depressions between it is called *ahqâf*, but this is only a particular variety of the *nefûd*; (ii) *dahanâ*, a hard gravelly plain covered at intervals with sand-drifts, here, as a rule, water can be reached by sinking wells, but the surface is usually extremely barren; (iii) *harrâ*, a surface of corrugated lava or scoria. In the north is the great *nefûd* which does not reach the Red Sea coast; towards the east this *nefûd* grows narrower and then connects by a neck with the *dahanâ* which sweeps south-east inside the coast of the Persian Gulf. The southern central area is occupied by a large *dahanâ* which is known as the *Ruba' el-Khâlî* or " abode of emptiness ", a desert as yet unexplored.

The northern *nefûd* extends about 140 miles from north to south, and 180 from east to west. In the *nefûd* proper there are no wells as the sand is too soft, but it contains a certain degree of moisture which suffices to nourish desert plants at some seasons of the year. The only break in its area is a depression

known as the *Jubba*, about 300 feet below the general level of the sand and sheltered by a ridge of sandstone hills: through this runs the route between Jawf and Ha'il (Hayil). Travelling across this *nefûd* is very slow and laborious as it is full of deep depressions and the sand is generally very soft. The plants here are the tamarisk, yerta, and the smaller flora and grasses. The first rains fall in November and very soon afterwards the grass begins to grow as well as the peculiar desert plants which have very long roots similar to those of what we describe as ice plants and rock plants. The surface of the sand in many places is sprinkled over with tiny flowers which give the appearance of a dust of silver and gold, in some parts the grass grows freely though thinly and the tamarisks which seemed to have withered away once more produce fresh growth. Deserted during the excessive heat of summer, most of the border tribes penetrate its recesses when the winter vegetation breaks out, and the various valleys of the *nefûd* are traversed by wandering bands with their herds. Human beings are unable to obtain water and cannot use the moisture in the herbage, so have to depend for drink on the milk of their herds.

South of the *nefûd* extends the Jebel Shammâr in a wide crescent convex towards the south. The climate there is healthy, the air exhilarating, and there is sufficient rainfall to provide fairly extensive grazing, whilst in many parts water can be reached at no great depth. All over this area are settled villages and towns, but the population is nomadic and pastoral, for the most part moving up into the *nefûd* after the winter rains. Across this district pass caravan routes connecting the north-east and the north-west and some of these routes must be of great antiquity.

West of the *Nefûd* and Jebel Shammar is the Hijâz or "barrier" which runs down the whole of the west side of Arabia from the head of the Gulf of 'Aqaba to Yemen. The southern part of this area is now called Asir, but this is only a modern name and the

district so called may be more properly regarded as the southern Hijâz. In the Hijâz are the two holy cities, Mecca and Medina, originally "stations" on a trade route running from south to north. The ports along the coast are no good. Down the Hijâz runs a mountainous belt which is highest in the north and only a little over 2,000 feet at its southern extremity. Further inland is a loftier mountain range whose slopes are largely covered with *harrâ*. In the space between these two ranges and along the coast west of the first belt are almost all the settlements. The route which for many centuries has connected Yemen with the north runs in the lower ground between the two ranges. In some parts there is a good climate. e.g. at Ta'if, and in the high ground behind Mecca there are occasional frosts even in summer nights. There are, however, no regular rainy seasons and the mean annual temperature approaches 90°. At present it is estimated that about one-sixth of the population is settled as against five-sixths which retain nomadic life. The real importance of the Hijâz is based on the ancient trade route which runs between the two ranges from San'a to el-'Ola or 'Aqaba, now the route of the pilgrims to Mecca. In the period just before the rise of Islam Jewish colonies had been established at Kheibar and along the northern portion of this route and the colonists, introducing improved methods of agriculture, had succeeded in developing and extending the possibilities of the oases. Though these colonies came to an end early in the Islamic period, the 'Umayyad Khalifs to some extent assisted and encouraged agricultural development and sent down Greek engineers who constructed wells and reservoirs; but under the 'Abbasids all this was stopped and the Hijâz reverted to its earlier and more savage condition, though it is quite possible that, under proper treatment, the land could be made fairly productive.

South of the Hijâz and its modern adjunct Asir is Yemen, which occupies the south-west corner of Arabia. In general

character it resembles the Hijâz: there are two main ridges with a series of plains between, outside the outer range is the *tihâma* or coastal belt, and inside the inner range a plateau extends to the foothills which border the great inner desert. The *tihâma* is fiercely hot by day but cool by night, enervatingly damp along the actual coast. The outer ridge has a favourable climate and is the most suited to the cultivation of coffee. Most of the Arabs are settled and many of the towns, such as San'a, Nejran, and Aden, are of considerable antiquity. Here, as along most of the south, the Arabs take readily to the sea and in early times communication was developed between Yemen, Upper Egypt, and East Africa.

To the east of Yemen and Aden is a district known as Hadramaut, though strictly this name refers only to the broad valley which runs from east to west and then, at its eastern extremity, turns down to the coast. It is, perhaps, the *Hazarmaweth* of Genesis x, 26. This country consists of (i) a coastal belt of arid plain and low sand hills, (ii) a dry plateau with an average elevation of 4,000 to 5,000 feet for the most part rising abruptly from the coastal belt and generally about 30 miles distant from the sea, (iii) deep valleys leading down into the main valley which is extremely fertile and in which water can be procured easily by sinking wells, but the last hundred miles or so of the main valley are now desert as the water is intercepted by irrigation works, (iv) a scarped belt along the north side of the valley serving as a barrier against the great central desert. To the east lies Dhofar or Zofar, now included in the government of Oman. This in ancient times was the land of incense, the chief source of spice supply for the ancient world, and still with a great incense harvest which is sent to India, but the western world now prefers the produce of further India.[2]

Oman occupies the south-east corner of Arabia and lies outside the entrance to the Persian Gulf. Although the greater

part of Arabia slopes from west to east this, the easternmost extremity, has a range of mountains which sweep round in a curve parallel to the coast of the Indian Ocean. The highest peak of these is Jebel Akhdar, which is nearly 10,000 feet.

From Oman the coast up the Persian Gulf is mostly low-lying. West of Oman is the promontory of el-Qatar; after this the coast runs north-west and is now occupied by the countries known as Hasa and Koweit, the islands of Bahrayn lying to the north-west of el-Qatar. Anciently, however, the name of Bahreyn was applied to all this part of Arabia up to the Shatt el-'Arab where the "two rivers" (= bahreyn), the Tigris and Euphrates, are united in one stream. Back of Hasa and Koweit is the *dahanâ* (cf. p. 6 above) and beyond that, south of Jebel Shammar, is now the kingdom of Nejd, a state of recent origin, which, under its present ruler, is the leading power in Arabia.

Thus the peninsula of Arabia has the Hijâz and Yemen along the Red Sea coast, minor settlements and Oman along the opposite coast; in the land between there is in the north the great *nefûd*, Jebel Shammar, and Nejd, in the south the great desert with Yemen, Hadramaut, Zofar, and Oman along its southern edge.

The Hijâz extends north to 'Aqaba and Ma'an. To the north-west, beyond the Gulf of 'Aqaba, lies the peninsula of Sinai which is an integral part of Arabia, in spite of its political connexion with Egypt. The chief feature of this peninsula is the mountain group which appears very early in the history of Egypt and Babylon as a source of copper supply.

North of the *nefûd* the desert extends along the east of the Jordan valley and Syria, separating Syria-Palestine from the Euphrates valley. This is known as the Syrian desert and also is a part of Arabia; it has often served as a watershed from which the Arab tribes have poured into Syria and Mesopotamia.

On either side of this "land of the Arabs" were the areas of river-valley culture developed by non-Semitic peoples, though

at a very early date the Arabs commenced to percolate amongst them.

The eastern desert of Egypt, between the Nile valley and the Red Sea should also be reckoned as part of Arabia. At the present time it is connected with the Arabian peninsula only by the Isthmus of Suez and the land of Sinai, but at a comparatively late geological period Yemen was joined to Africa so that the Red Sea was an inland lake and, as J. de Morgan has shown (*La prehistoire orientale*, vol. i, ch. vi), the Nile once ran much to the west of its present bed before it broke its way through the great barrier of Aswan and the Silsileh. At one time, therefore, the eastern desert of Egypt truly was a part of Arabia and the bridge across Sinai has prevented it from being permanently separated. All through the course of history there has been a drifting of Arabs across Sinai into this Egyptian desert, though, at the same time, there has been an occasional immigration of Africans, especially since Diocletian transported the Bishari tribes thither.

(c) *The Semitic Race*

Bevan's description of conditions in Western Asia suggests that the men of the desert were a survival of earlier days, that they were a section of the community left behind in the progress of civilization and gradually hemmed in by the more civilized communities of the valleys of the Euphrates and the Nile, the two quarters in which they were not restricted by the mountains and the sea. In general outline this seems a reasonable and probable hypothesis. We may suppose a wide-spreading community at one time extending across West Asia and North Africa, then split in two by the evolution of culture and the formation of a settled society in the Nile valley, and the eastern section constricted between that culture and the culture of the Euphrates valley. Between these two cultures the eastern section was more or less cut off and segregated, it

remained backward in its social development as it adhered to the older nomadic life and so was out of touch with the rapid cultural progress made by the settled communities, though that backwardness rather denotes a slower rate of progress than that it was absolutely stationary, and in its comparative segregation it developed the peculiarities which we now regard as Semitic characteristics.

As Sir Flinders Petrie[1] observes, "race" can only mean a social group whose rate of assimilation exceeds the rate of change produced by foreign elements. If we suppose that the Arabs, i.e. the Semites of the desert, are a survival of an earlier widespread community trapped between two cultures, and admit that those cultures go back to a remote period before the beginning of recorded history, we must yet recognize that their segregation came at a comparatively late period in the history of the human race and that, at some earlier stage, there probably was free movement over all North Africa and West Asia, so that at most the idea of Arabia as the cradle of the Semites can mean no more than that it was the area in which certain elements of source unknown were at some period segregated and in their segregation developed the characteristics which we term Semitic. So far as those characteristics relate to culture they are, no doubt, largely due to the peculiar economic conditions of a nomadic people as contrasted with those of settled communities and have their parallels in many other peoples in other parts of the world. So far as they concern language it seems no exaggeration to say that the Semitic languages are a specialized group of a large family most of whose other members are roughly classed together as Hamitic.[2] So far as they concern racial (physical) type, the elements segregated in South-West Asia may not have been homogeneous, certainly they were afterwards joined by other elements from Syria, but climate, habits, and general conditions of life tended to produce a general similarity in the physiological type, though

there is no very clearly defined Semitic type beyond the lean spare frame due to an active life in the desert: the popular idea of the Semitic type appears from the monuments to be rather Hittite.

The older tribal life, though based on blood-kinship, was not based on a blood-kinship due to a common ancestry but on that which arose from participation in common sacrificial food such as we see in the Israelitish passover,[3] so the tribe was not composed only of those sprung from a common stock, but rather of those who shared a common food, and this enabled the tribe to adopt and assimilate alien elements which in early times it did freely, and we have no assurance that any particular tribe represents a racial unity. The genealogies and traditions of a common ancestry are no more than the speculations of later theorists trying to explain existing groups, and in the case of the Arabs these theorists do not appear until well into the Islamic period.[4]

The term "Semites" is often used simply to denote all those social groups which spoke a Semitic language, just as "Latin race" is applied loosely to all those who speak a Latin language and who show a great diversity of racial origin. Thus used it is a relic of a former time when it was generally supposed that language was an infallible key to race, it not being recognized that conquest, commercial intercourse, and many other reasons, have often induced communities to adopt new languages: the negroes of the West Indies are all English speaking but can hardly be described as of Anglo-Saxon race. With the stricter physiological idea of race, however, we are not here concerned, but only with the race as a social group which has acquired a certain degree of cultural uniformity and is relatively homogeneous when compared with other groups, and no more than this should be implied in the use of the expression "Semitic race": it is a matter of cultural community rather than physiological descent. Physiological characteristics are finally and irrevocably

decided before birth : cultural conditions are all acquired after birth and depend, not on heredity, but on contact. At the same time we must recognize that the social group has a life of its own and a distinct corporate spirit which develops and modifies on its own lines as though the social group were an organic body with its own evolutionary life : and the individual members are drawn into this life and shaped by it.

Nomadic tribes occupied in hunting and pasturing flocks range over large areas, but settled communities engaged in agriculture are tied to the soil on which they have spent much time and labour, and so these settled groups develop peculiarities in dialect and culture with the result that a number of sub-groups are formed. The nomadic tribes, usually moving according to the season of the year, expect to find their pasture and hunting grounds and their own springs and wells secure from outside interference. But civilization is essentially aggressive, and though the settled cultivator lacks the mobility of the nomad, he is able to raise a very formidable barrier of defence round his own settled country and gradually pushes this forward into the area of the nomads. Thus civilization made war upon the Arabs by military incursions into their country, by making roads of communication across it, and by gradually encroaching upon its borders. This, of course, is the oft-repeated history of the colonization of land which had previously been the free territory of hunter and pastoral nomads. Thus, in the history of Yathrib (Medina) we find that the expansion of the activities of the Jewish colonists aroused the resentment of the neighbouring tribes who found that portions of what they regarded as their pasture land by traditional right was encroached upon by being brought into cultivation by the colonists.

We may take the Semitic race, in the narrower sense, as being the nomadic population of South-West Asia, a social group of mixed descent, differentiated from its neighbours by economic,

social, and cultural conditions: and, in the wider sense, as all those communities which had been, at some time or other, affected by immigrants from that nomadic community and which, as a result, had adopted a language of Semitic origin. In the narrower sense, therefore, it was a social group of relatively backward type, and in the broader sense it includes all Semitic speaking people: in neither sense does it denote a race as implied in physical anthropology.

(*d*) *The Arab Community*

The Arab historians always draw a very strong line of demarcation between the two divisions of the Arab race which they term Qaḥtân and 'Adnân, the former of which they describe as Yemenites or South Arabs, the latter as North Arabs. Undoubtedly there is good reason for such distinction as the civil wars of early Islam turn very much upon the rivalries between these two who always seem to be at enmity, and it appears that these feelings of hostility trace back to pre-Islamic times. The historians trace back the origin of these two divisions to two branches into which the Arab stock had separated in remote antiquity and construct tables of descent showing how they had been apart for many generations, but no great weight can be given to these genealogies for they can mean nothing when applied to a community which does not reckon descent in the paternal line, and the patriarchal theory, at least amongst the North Arabs, was of recent introduction in the time of Muhammad.[1] Obviously the historians are trying to account for a division which was a very real thing in their day, though we may not accept the theory they bring forward to account for it. Admittedly also there was a very marked difference in language and culture between the settled Arabs of the southern kingdoms and the nomadic tribes to their north, so marked in language that we often find South Arabic, Akkadian, and Abyssinian grouped together as against North Arabic, Hebrew,

and Aramaic,[2] and the distinction is hardly less in culture: but these very real ancient divisions, cultural rather than racial, do not quite correspond with the two divisions given by the Arabic historians, that is to say, all those whom we regard as descendants of the people of the ancient Sabæan and Minæan kingdoms are classed under the Qaḥṭân or South Arabs, but a great many others appear in this group which we would be inclined to regard as North Arabs and, in Muslim times, both use what we would describe as North Arabic: indeed, so far as language is concerned, we can go no further than to say that it is only amongst the Qaḥṭân that we can find survivals of the ancient South Arabic, but even there it is no more than sporadic survivals in Hadramaut, Zofar, Mahra, and the island of Soqotra, and only in these two last does it colour the whole dialect. This, no doubt, is largely due to Islam which has exercised a great influence in spreading the dialect of the Ḥijâz until it has become the recognized standard of all those who claim any degree of education, and has made a very deep impress upon the speech of the people generally.

In Muslim times the two groups of Qaḥṭân and 'Adnân seem rather to be hereditary political factions than racial divisions. The Qaḥṭân certainly include those who seem to be descendants of the people of the ancient southern kingdoms, but they include also those who were settled in Hira and in the north-east. It seems quite possible, indeed, that the two groups represent in the main the two "spheres of influence" of the period immediately preceding Muhammad, the Qaḥṭân being those in touch with Persia, the 'Adnân those more or less allied with Byzantium. This, no doubt, would only apply to their main constituents: local rivalries would often cause tribes to join one faction simply because a hated rival was in the other. It must be admitted also that the south enjoyed an ancient prestige which helps to explain why some tribes were so anxious to claim descent from southern groups.

One of the most salient features in the Prophet's later ministry was the intense rivalry between the two cities of Mecca and Medina, and this certainly did not first commence at the migration. Before then Medina obviously was jealous of the wealth of its southern rival and was disposed to interfere with the security of the trade route. Tradition relates that the Arab tribes settled at Medina were Yemenites, whilst the Meccans belonged to the northern group. Here at least it is clear that the Meccans were of the pro-Byzantine party,[3] as might be expected from their close commercial relations with Syria: it might conceivably be that enmity with Mecca led the Arabs of Medina to ally themselves with the Qaḥṭân, and this alliance was afterwards explained by the historians by a legendary descent from Yemenites. During the century of strife between Persia and Byzantium which preceded the coming of Islam the Arabs were courted by both these two powers and, whilst the main strength of Persia was in the east and south, that of Byzantium in the west, the Arabs, with their natural gift for intrigue, tried to play off one power against the other and thus produced many subdivisions and cross currents.

The Himyarites, the last great power in the south, fell into decay in the course of the third–fourth century A.D., a decay which may have been connected with the expansion of Byzantine commercial activity in the Red Sea, and after that there seems to have been a re-grouping of the Arab tribes in which the ancient rivalry between the settled Arabs of the south and the nomads of the north survived as a tradition, but an entirely new series of combinations was produced by changed political conditions.

Qaḥṭân is used to denote the faction which in Muslim times claimed to be of southern descent. The 'Abbasid historians described all the Yemenites as descended from an ancestor named Qaḥṭân,[4] and identified this Qaḥṭân with the Yoqṭân of Gen. x, 25, chiefly because Genesis speaks of Yoqṭân as the father of Saba'.[5] No doubt Qaḥṭân does represent a

tribal group as Claudius Ptolemy in the second century speaks of a people called *καταvῖται*,[6] and this may connect with the town of Qaḥṭân which is described as being between Ẓabid and San'ā.[7] The Prophet and the Quraysh who formed the aristocracy of Islam belonged to the 'Adnân group and this probably urged the rival Qaḥṭân to create a South Arabian *saga* to their own glory, in which the prestige of the ancient southern kingdoms was made the basis of claims which were set off against the more recent distinctions of the 'Adnân,[8] and this *saga* has left a deep impression upon the productions of the Arabic historians. The Qaḥṭân are divided into the two sub-groups of Ḥimyar and Kahlan representing the settled Arabs of the south and their nomadic kinsmen, these latter including, perhaps, those who were later adherents of the Qaḥṭân. The Ḥimyarites represent the old South Arab element, but even these are not a clearly defined group as there are associated with them the Qada-'a and Tanûkh of Ḥira, the tribe of Kalb, and the Juhaina of the Hijâz: we can say no more than that the Ḥimyarites formed the nucleus. The others claimed Ḥimyaritic descent: this claim may have been true, supposing that those others had moved away to the north and so had become assimilated to the North Arabs, or it may be merely a speculative theory of the historians to explain their enumeration under the Ḥimyar division of the Qaḥṭân.

The Kahlan division of the Qaḥṭân consists of four elements :— (i) the Ta' or Tayy, now known as the Shammar. These were the nearest to Mesopotamia in the early centuries of the Christian era and so in Syriac and Jewish Aramaic their name is used to include all nomadic Arabs.[9]

(ii) The Azd group which invaded Oman and so came under Persian influence shortly before Muhammad, and with them was placed the B. Ghassan of the Syrian frontier, perhaps drawn into this association by grievances against the Byzantine government, and the Aws and Khazraj of Medina, who are also

in this group, are there almost certainly from anti-'Adnân motives.

(iii) The 'Amila-Judham group of Palestine, and with them the Kinda of Hadramaut and the Lakhmids of Hira, all pro-Persian.

(iv) The Hamdan-Madhhij group who for the most part still remain in Yemen.

The rival group is known variously as 'Adnân, Ma'add, or Nizâr. Of these names Ma'add is actually used by Procopius [10] and Nizâr occurs in an inscription of A.D. 328 found at an-Nemara, so apparently this northern federation is formed round a nucleus which was in existence in the fourth century. The Arabic historians explain these three names by saying that 'Adnân was the father, Ma'add his son, and Nizâr his grandson.[11]

The 'Adnân or North Arabs are divided into two sub-groups, viz. :—

(i) The Rabi'a which includes the Asad, 'Anaza, Namir, and other tribes of the north-east.

(ii) The Mudar to which belonged the Qays, 'Adwân, Hawâzim, the Kimâna, which included the Quraysh of Mecca, the Kilâb, and others.

There was a marked rivalry, often leading to warfare, between the Rabi'a and Mudar, and here again we seem to be dealing with party factions rather than racial divisions. The rivalry of the two may have been developed, if not actually started, by the jealousies bred by the division of the spoil gained by the Muslim armies as they advanced into Asia.

(e) *Percolation of Culture into Arabia*

Although we have described the desert Arabs as segregated and lagging behind in cultural progress, this isolation and backwardness was merely relative: though segregated, they were not untouched by their neighbours and their culture. To some extent the Bedwin of to-day reproduce the conditions of the ancient patriarchs, and even those of the later stone age,

but they are not altogether unacquainted with the weapons, tools, and even luxuries of modern civilization, and so far from being simple savages are perfectly competent to hold their own in diplomacy and politics. From the earliest times culture has percolated into the desert lands which we call Arabia, sometimes by commercial intercourse, sometimes by the planting of colonies, and sometimes by the strong attraction of the articles offered for sale in the border towns tending to tempt the Arabs from their wilderness to these marts: this last, the influencing of the Arabs through the medium of the frontier marts and so obtaining indirect control of their movements, or at least information about them, was a policy deliberately adopted by the ancient empires, diligently followed by Persia and Byzantium, by the Turks in later times, and now suggested as a wise policy for the European powers who have mandates in the Near East.

It is when we come to this question of intercourse and influence that we are naturally impelled to make some inquiry about the psychology, the mentality, of the Arab. Essentially the typical Arab is a cynical materialist with a keenly logical outlook, a strong sense of his own dignity, and a consuming avarice. His mind has no room for romance, still less for sentiment; he has very little inclination for religion and takes but slight heed of anything which cannot be measured in practical values. His sense of personal dignity is so strong that he is naturally in revolt against every form of authority: his own chieftains, his leaders in battle, can expect little but hatred, envy, and treachery from the moment of their election and from those who were their friends and supporters to that moment. A benefactor is a natural object of attack because a benefactor confers a sense of obligation, and consequently a sense of inferiority, upon the recipient of his generosity. Fr. Lammens describes the Arab as the typical democrat, and we must recognize that in his character are some of the salient characteristics of democracy in a somewhat exaggerated form. This attitude

of perpetual revolt against every power which seeks to control his freedom, even for his own good, is the key to the series of aimless crimes and treacheries which make up the greater part of an Arab history, and it is the lack of that key which, in recent years, has led European powers into so many mistakes and to the needless sacrifice of so many lives. Of course this impatience of control is irritating to those who are trying to guide the intractible Arab into the paths of Western social conditions. A. Servier's recent book on the *Psychology of the Musulman* shows how extremely angry it can make the orderly mind of a well-meaning but rather unsympathetic French observer accustomed to a paternal government, and no doubt the experience of the Sidonian princess Jezebel who tried to civilize (on her own lines) the settled Arabs of Israel was similar. We might sum up this by saying that the Arab is, or may be, cruel, treacherous, unscrupulous, and insubordinate: but we might equally well say that he has a passionate urge towards personal freedom which impels him to break through every restraint which impedes his individual liberty, and he does so regardless of his own interests. In all other respects coldly logical and calculating, he becomes like a trapped wild animal when his liberty is curtailed, and is then capable of any madness in a break for freedom. On the other hand he is loyal and obedient to the ancient traditions of his tribe: the duties of hospitality, alliance in war, of friendship, and such like, are faithfully performed on the lines of recognized precedent, he keeps punctiliously the letter of the law, that is to say of the unwritten law of his own tribal custom, but owns no obligation outside the strict letter. On the whole it is probable that these general characteristics belong to a particular stage of social evolution: they express the morality of a particular stratum of development rather than of any particular race. As soon as the Arabs settle down to agricultural life this mentality seems to be modified.

This psychology must be borne in mind in the history of all dealings with Arabs. Conquest does not mean control. It is futile to expect that by bestowing on them the "blessings of civilization"—which they do not desire or value—they will be made loyal and obedient subjects, ready to take orders from a police official. Such an idea will only lead to a revolt such as took place in 'Iraq in 1920, and such as the Italians had to meet in Tripoli some years before. Apparently the Egyptians had like experiences in Sinai in ancient times, and so the Assyrians policed the trade routes and made occasional punitive raids on those who interfered with the caravans passing along them: but the Persians, according to Herodotus (3. 88, 2) tactfully disclaimed any attempt to rule the Arabs and were content to make alliances with them, accepting gifts which were described as presents not as tribute.

Since the early days of Islam—tradition says since the time of the khalif 'Umar (A.D. 634–43)—it has been the deliberate policy of Islam to exclude non-Muslims from Arabia and to reserve the land as a breeding ground for Arab Muslims. Certainly this has been a policy since the accession of the 'Abbasids (A.D. 750), but in modern times that strict reservation has been narrowed down to the sacred territory within which the ritual pilgrimage takes place. In pre-Islamic days, however, there was no such tendency to exclusiveness: the land was not easily accessible to the Greeks and Romans, but it appears that, shortly before the coming of the Prophet, there was a clearly marked sphere of Byzantine influence down the Hijâz, and a similar sphere of Persian influence and partial conquest down the east and along the south. These influences had been preceded by Egyptian and Babylonian influences which go back to a remote antiquity. The country was crossed by trade routes which kept the Arabs in constant contact with the surrounding lands and from those lands a certain measure of culture seems to have percolated into Arabia. In the later

pre-Islamic period Christian and Jewish missions had penetrated the country, colonies of Syrians, Jews, and Abyssinians were scattered about in various parts, and although many remoter tribes remained in a backward condition there were other settled communities, such as that in Mecca, which were commercial republics of a cosmopolitan character with developed trading and banking systems and agents in foreign towns.

The usual picture of the rise of Islam depicts its evolution as taking place in a primitive community of desert Arabs. But this is very far removed from the facts. Islam had its cradle in a district where civilization of an advanced type had percolated from remote ages: that culture had reached the Hijâz, it is true, through a kind of refracting medium, the influences of Egypt, Babylonia, and Byzantium were all received at second hand. The Hijâz never quite formed part of the civilized world but hung on the fringe. In studying the life and work of the Prophet we have no need to inquire how he came to hear about various Christian and Jewish usages and traditions mentioned in the Qur'an, but start from the fact that he lived in a community where the whole contemporary life of the Hellenistic and Persian world was fairly well known, but with inaccurate detail. Arabia was not isolated but rather lay on the edge of the cultural life of the day. The Prophet himself does not claim to be the teacher of a new religion, but rather presents himself as a religious reformer who aimed at restoring the ancient cult of Abraham which the Jews and Christians already professed, but whose substance they had obscured by accretions of error. Islam cannot be truly appreciated by those who ignore the continuous cultural development which took place in Arabia and decline to recognize how for many centuries the country had been penetrated by cultural influences from the neighbouring lands.

The same holds good in the sphere of language. Classical Arabic is not a language which has preserved its purity by its

isolation: there was no such isolation, or at most the isolation was relative—the Hijâz was less influenced by alien elements than Syria or Mesopotamia, but there was not an absence of such elements. The Arabic of the Qur'an shows a language already giving indications of decay, there are phenomena which can be explained only as survivals of forms which had long passed into disuse, e.g. the causative of the verb (*'af'ala*) is no longer made by means of a prefixed *s-*, save in a very few cases, but the reflexive causative is still formed by the addition of the reflexive *t-* to the causative *s-* (*istaf'ala*, etc.): this can only be explained as a survival of causative *s-* which, though obsolete in Arabic, appears in full vigour in Akkadian and to some extent in Syriac. Sometimes vernacular dialects in Arabic which had no written literature until European philologists began to collect material, retain forms which appear to be earlier than those current in literary Arabic. The Classical language is based on the seventh century dialect of the Hijâz, which was the part most exposed to alien influences and the most we can say is that it retains some ancient forms which have disappeared from other Semitic languages, though it also has lost some early forms which are retained elsewhere.

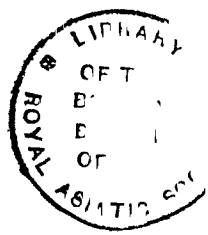
As known to us the Semitic languages form a very closely related group, in pre-Islamic times distributed over a very limited area; no one of these can possibly display the parent stock, but survivals of the older forms are scattered through the various members of the group; it is impossible to restore the "Ur-Semitic", but in particular details a reasonable conjecture can often be made as to the original form.

Culture includes many various and different elements, of which language is one, others being social structure, law, religion, the arts and crafts, etc. But all these have one distinguishing factor, that they are all learned by intercourse, never inherited: they become the heritage of the community, not of the individual.

The chief ways in which culture percolated into Arabia were

(i) by the formation of colonies or outposts to cultivate the soil or to exploit mines, (ii) by the opening up of regular trade routes across the desert and the formation of alliances with the Arabs through whose territory they passed and who, in return for subsidies or blackmail, abstained from interference with the caravans and kept off other Arab raiders, and (iii) by the formation of marts and settlements of Arabs along the frontier so that the culture learned there filtered back into the desert tribes. These were the chief means by which external influences were brought to bear upon the Arabs, and it will be our task in the following pages to set forth the evidence for such colonies, trade routes, and border settlements. The evidence is to be found partly in the historical records of those nations which invaded Arabia, partly in inscriptions and objects found in Arabia, partly in social and religious customs presumably derived from external sources, and partly in language. The evidence of physical anthropology is of little service in this connexion, though it shows us that the Arab community was not homogeneous : but racial types, a matter of natural history, does not necessarily assist us in tracing culture drift.

The theory of the segregation of Arabia can be admitted only in a very modified form ; the elements there were common to it and the lands outside and differed mainly in their economic and social setting. Yet the segregation must be admitted as real within certain limits, not due to any geographical barrier but to the economic distinction between the nomad and the settled agriculturalist.


ROYAL ASIATIC

NOTES TO CHAPTER I

(*a*) *Area of Arab Occupation*

[1] E. R. Bevan, *House of Seleucus*, Lond., 1902, vol. i, pp. 20–1.

(*b*) *Peninsula of Arabia*

[2] On the incense country cf. below, Ch. V.

(*c*) *Semitic Race*

[1] Sir W. Flinders Petrie in Address to the Brit. Assoc., Ipswich, 1895.
[2] Cf. O'Leary, *Characteristics of the Hamitic Languages*, Bristol, 1914.
[3] Cf. Exodus xii, 48–9.
[4] Robertson Smith, *Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia*, Camb., 1885, pp. 3, etc.

(*d*) *The Arab Community*

[1] Robertson Smith, op. cit., pp. 131, etc.
[2] Thus A. Ungnad, *Das Wesen des Ursemitischen*, Leipzig, 1925.
[3] Qur'an xxx, 1–4. "The Greeks have been defeated in a land near by: but after their defeat they shall defeat their foes in a few years. First and last the affair is with God. And on that day shall the faithful rejoice in the aid of their God." Very obviously the final triumph of the Greeks is a subject of rejoicing to the faithful.
[4] Ibn Hisham, i, 4; Mas'udi, *Murûj*, i, 79.
[5] Genesis x, 26. Thus Mas'udi, *Murûj*, iii, 143, etc., and *Tanbih*, 31.
[6] Ptolemy, *Geogr.*, 6, 7, 20, 23.
[7] Al-Muqaddasi in *Bibl. Geogr. Arab.*, iii, 87, 94.
[8] Cf. V. Kremer, *Über die Südarabische Saga*, Leipzig, 1866.
[9] מיינא— the ע is inserted by false etymology from מעה "wander".
[10] Procopius, *B. Pers.*, i, 19, 14; 20, 9.
[11] Mas'udi, *Murûj*, v, 223; vi, 42, etc.

CHAPTER II

EGYPTIAN PENETRATION OF ARABIA

(*a*) *Nautical Enterprise of the Egyptians*

At one time, it would appear, the great mass of rock at Aswân and the Jebel Silsilah checked the northward flow of the Nile and diverted its course towards the north-west, where traces of the ancient river bed can still be discerned.[1] Later it broke through this great barrier and formed its present channel. The Egyptian community and its culture took form and the whole course of Egyptian history was worked out along the banks of this new channel north of Aswân. It does not seem that any very early effort was made to penetrate the great desert on the west which was commonly regarded as the abode of the dead, but in the pre-dynastic period there was intercourse by land with the countries which lay south of Aswân and the First Cataract, and fairly early in the dynastic period expeditions went down into those southern parts, the *Ta-Nehesu* or "land of the blacks", in search of gold and slaves. On the north of Egypt lay the sea, and on the east a desert which extended to the shores of the Red Sea, at one time an inland lake with land connexions with Arabia on its north and south: the northern land bridge remained permanently and was Egypt's only land connexion with the rest of the civilized world, but the southern connexion was broken through and the Red Sea united with the Indian Ocean, whilst the course of the upper Nile only led to lands where culture was in a backward condition. Judging from these connexions, therefore, Egypt would seem to have been a peculiarly isolated country. This, in fact, was very far from the truth as Egypt from an early period had

opened up contact with other countries by sea, and so the development of nautical enterprise is a very important phase of Egyptian cultural history.

The Egyptian community developed on the banks of the Nile below the first Cataract, and the river served as its great highway of communication. This of course implies a very early date for the navigation of the river itself, and then the ships and boats at first used only for river transit were found available for crossing the Mediterranean and Red Sea.

The earlier navigation which was confined to the Nile goes back to pre-dynastic times and has left its evidence in pictures of boats with oars and some with sails on pre-dynastic pottery.[2] Our first distinct evidence of over-sea trade begins with Dynasty III, so we may consider the earlier period of navigation confined to the river as extending through the pre-dynastic age and the first two dynasties, that is to say, prior to 3000. B.C.

Evidence of sea-going ships begins with king Sneferu, the tenth monarch of Dynasty III, about 2900 B.C. This king sent an expedition of forty ships across the Mediterranean to Syria to bring cedar to Egypt, for Egypt has always suffered from a lack of the more substantial forest trees and has been obliged to procure its wood from abroad.[3] Now it is hardly likely that a royal expedition of forty ships sent to procure a considerable supply of timber was a first venture across the northern sea, so we may reasonably suppose that a sea-going trade had arisen and developed before this, though we are obliged to take king Sneferu's enterprise as marking a definite stage in the evolution of navigation because it gives our first evidence of such over-sea trade.

If there was traffic across the Mediterranean at that early date it would seem probable enough that there was navigation of the Red Sea, the more so because there was a very ancient road connecting the Nile valley with the Red Sea coast. A little before reaching Erment the Nile begins a bend to the east and

this reaches its maximum about Koptos, the modern Quft: a few miles lower, at Keneh, it returns sharply to the west. Thus Koptos is at the point where the Nile is nearest to the Red Sea and from very early times a road has been in use between the river and the coast. This road passes through the Wadi Hammâmât or the Wadi Fowakhiah as it is popularly called, and terminates on the Red Sea coast a little to the north of the modern Qosser. Koptos began to rise into importance about the IVth Dynasty, but it does not necessarily follow that this was due to the Red Sea trade. In the Wadi Hammâmât there were quarries which were the chief source from which the kings obtained granite, hard sandstone, and alabaster, whilst onyx also was procured from the neighbourhood. Weigall says that "archaic inscriptions in the quarries show that they were already being worked in the Ist and IInd dynasties".[4] Under Seti I (XIXth Dynasty, 1313–1292) gold mines were opened there, and we have a detailed plan of the mines and quarries in the Turin papyrus.[5] In earlier days gold was procured from Nubia and the lands to the south. Although the quarries, and later on the mines, largely explain the importance of the Wadi Hammâmât road, still it seems that it was early used also for access to the Red Sea and this suggests that Red Sea navigation had commenced quite as soon as that of the Mediterranean. Our first definite proof of maritime enterprise on the Red Sea belongs to Dynasty V, when king Sahure (circ. 2743–2731 B.C.) sent an expedition along the African coast and left a representation of his fleet and an account of his exploit on the walls of his tomb temple.[6] The same king also sent a mission up the Nile to Nubia and one of his officials has recorded his name on the rocks at Sahel Island, near the First Cataract.[7] Apparently Sahure sent his expedition by sea in the hope of finding a shorter way to the Sudân from which he was procuring gold and slaves. In the Wadi Hammâmât there are a number of inscriptions, the earliest of Dynasty V

(c. 3360) which shows a series of royal names and titles, some referring to kings who worked the quarries there, others to expeditions sent down the Red Sea.[8] Already in Dynasty VI the Egyptians were intrepid seamen and well accustomed to carry commerce across the Mediterranean and the Red Sea. To that dynasty belongs the tomb of Her-Khuf at Aswân which has inscriptions relating a series of expeditions to the land of Punt which seem to have been purely commercial in character. The navigation of the Red Sea played a very important part in the commercial expansion of Egypt and this is emphasized by the survival of a popular romance dealing with a sailor's adventures there[9]: such a work very clearly indicates that the Egyptians of the day were not devoid of nautical tastes. The incense trade passed along the Wadi Hammâmât and so evidently there was continuous intercourse with South Arabia, the great incense producing land, or with the African coast from which incense was procured in the XIIth Dynasty and perhaps earlier.

Towards the end of the XIth Dynasty (c. 2500) a Wadi Hammâmât inscription records an expedition to Punt undertaken by a royal official named Hennu. In this he tells us that he sent bodies of men in advance of the army and caused them to dig wells and construct reservoirs along the route. By his improvements he made the road through the Wadi easier and brought it into more general use.[10]

Herodotus tells us that king Sesostris proceeded down the Arabian Gulf along the shores of the Red Sea, conquering the nations along the coast as he went.[11] Sesostris denotes Senusert (Usertsen) I of Dynasty XII (1970–1935 B.C.), and the statement is endorsed by a lengthy inscription in the tomb of the general Ameni who served under Amenemhat I and Senusert I, and is buried in one of the northern grottos at Beni Hasan.[12] A little later in the same dynasty Usertsen III (1887–1849) completed the conquest of Nubia and has left

a stele with a record of his exploit.[13] The next king of this dynasty, Amenemhat III, is noted in a Wadi Hammâmât inscription as having worked the quarries there. Thus the XIIth Dynasty, a period of great prosperity, shows a very distinct expansion towards the south and increased navigation of the Red Sea.

The next two dynasties are rather obscure, and then follow the two Hyksos dynasties (XV, XVI) during which Egypt was under alien rulers of Asiatic, probably Semitic, origin. Dynasty XVII shows a revolution against these alien rulers and the restored kingdom reaches its golden age under the XVIIIth Dynasty (1580–1350).

The guiding principle of the policy of the XVIIIth Dynasty was to secure the country from any further attempt at invasion by the Asiatic tribes and this indicated the conquest and control of Syria which was carried out by Amenhotep I (1557–1501) with the help of a regular navy, which marks a further stage in the development of Egyptian nautical enterprise. As a result of this his successor Thothmes I was able to claim the Euphrates as the eastern boundary of Egypt. But this did not mean that all attention was concentrated on the eastern shores of the Mediterranean to the exclusion of enterprise on the Red Sea. A little late in this same dynasty queen Hatshepsut in the early years of the fifteenth century B.C. sent an expedition down the Red Sea to Punt, the land to the south of Egypt, which apparently included Nubia, Somaliland, etc. A very full description of her fleet, its experiences in Punt, and the treasures it brought back, can be seen depicted on the walls of her temple at Der el-Bahari.[14] When the queen sent this expedition she seems to have made ready her fleet in the Nile and sent it out to the Red Sea by means of a canal which connected the east or Pelusiac branch of the Nile with the Gulf of Suez. Herodotus says that this canal was begun by Necho (Necos) of Dynasty XXVI, but no doubt he refers to its being cleaned out and restored after the

neglect into which we know it was allowed to fall in the XXth and following dynasties. He describes it as starting from the Nile a little above Bubastis (Bilbays), " at first it is carried along the Arabian side of the Egyptian plain as far as the range of hills above Memphis by which the plain is bounded and where are the great quarries, then it passes along the foot of the hills, going from west to east, afterwards turning it enters a narrow pass and proceeds southwards until it reaches the Arabian Gulf."[15] It seems to have been in use all through the Middle Kingdom, but fell into neglect in the XXth Dynasty, although Rameses III of that dynasty and his immediate successors maintained a fleet in the Red Sea, but evidently preferred to use a port near Qosser and the road through the Wadi Hammâmât. Pliny supposes that it only reached the Bitter Lakes, through which the Suez Canal now passes, and was never carried further owing to the difference of level between the Red Sea and the Nile, but Diodorus tells us that its mouth was near Arsinoe and so not far from the modern Suez.[16] It has several times been filled in with sand and cleared again. It was restored by the Ptolemies, re-opened by the mediaeval khalifs and maintained until the discovery of the passage round the Cape to India caused this " overland route " to fall into neglect. Its general course can still be traced and mounds remain along what were its banks.

In the XVIIIth Dynasty we first find references to " Keftiu " [17] which apparently denotes the land and people of Crete. During the XIX–XXth Dynasties the northern seamen began to cause annoyance to the Egyptians both along the Mediterranean coast of Egypt and along the Syrian coast, Syria being then an Egyptian province. The first reference to these in the Amarna records refers to them as " Shirdana ", but in the more detailed account on the walls of the temple of Medinet Habu, where Rameses III describes his repulse of those pirates who attempted to settle on the coast of Egypt, they are specified as Pulesata,

Uashasha, Takrui, and Danauna. Repelled from Egypt, some of these made a settlement on the coast of Canaan and the first-mentioned group, the Pulesata, were the progenitors of those whom we know as Philistines.

In the temple of Karnak there is a festival hall of Thothmes III, the same monarch who first makes reference to the Keftiu, and on its walls are lists of the various flowers, plants, birds, and animals to be seen in the temple gardens, many of these, it appears, imported from Syria. The conquest of Syria had followed the expulsion of the Hyksos and was a measure intended to prevent any other invasion of Egypt by the Asiatic tribes. It was held down to the days of Akhnaton (1375–1358) and the Tell el-Amarna records are largely occupied with the problems arising from the disturbed condition of Syria, a condition which resulted in the total loss of the province. In the next dynasty it was recovered by Seti I (1313–1292) and held by the help of a regular navy operating in the Mediterranean, but under Rameses III (1198–1167) was finally lost, not because Egypt was decadent so much as because the alien element in West Asia had greatly increased in number and were of more warlike character.

The decay of Egyptian power in Syria was accompanied by the appearance of the Phoenicians as the leading traders and navigators of the Mediterranean. The origin of this people is so problematical that most modern writers prefer to pass it by without even a casual reference.[18] All we can say for certain is that they were the seafaring denizens of Sidon and its colonies and that these had been seaports from a very early period. Before they became prominent as merchants they may have been recruited or replaced by Semitic invaders from the east, part of the great westward movement of the Semites which produced the Hyksos invasion of Egypt, and it is just possible that they received further additions from the Pulesata settled on the coast of Canaan. Their culture, as illustrated by metope pottery, etc., shows Ægean influence.

Thus, throughout the whole period of ancient Egyptian history we find abundant evidence of river navigation. From Dynasty III we have evidence of the navigation of the Mediterranean on a large scale, and from Dynasty V of equally extensive navigation in the Red Sea, in both cases the implication being that private maritime enterprise must have been active before the way was opened for the larger undertakings of the royal fleets. With Dynasty XVIII a regular navy comes on the scene, first in the Mediterranean, then in the Red Sea, but about the same time the Phoenicians appear and most of the commercial navigation of the Mediterranean passes into their hands. After that Egyptian maritime enterprise still took the lead in the Red Sea and so continued down to later dynasties.

(*b*) *The Land Route by Sinai*

The penetration of Sinai was especially connected with the supply of copper which was of great importance to Egypt where, at the commencement of the First Dynasty, the copper age was just beginning. For some time copper was a " luxurious adjunct to a highly developed industry of flaked flint " [1] : it was used for works of art, and some time elapsed before it displaced the use of flint in tools. At first copper came from the north, from Syria, and seems to have been introduced by the " Armenoid " race which appeared in Egypt well before the end of the pre-Dynastic period : later, however, an easier source of supply was found in the peninsula of Sinai where mines were worked in the Wadi Maghara on the western side of the peninsula, a little north of the modern town of Tor, and there a number of bas-reliefs and inscriptions bear witness to the operations of the Egyptians.[2]

The earliest relief belongs to Dynasty I (circ. 3900 B.C.) and shows king Smerkha slaying a native, a design which became a conventional model often reproduced in the later bas-reliefs.[3] These mines gradually became the chief source of copper supply

in Egypt and may perhaps have been worked by the native Semites before the Egyptians arrived. In the IIIrd Dynasty (3000–2900), they were in regular use and were visited by king Zeser (circ. 2980), who not only drew copper thence but also worked turquoise mines and used their products to adorn the chambers of his pyramid.[4] His visit is recorded in an inscription in the Wadi.[5] In the IVth Dynasty king Sneferu (circ. 2766) conquered the peninsula and recorded his exploit in a relief.[6] After conquering the country he seized the mines and held the natives in control by forts which he garrisoned with Egyptian troops and which served also as places of refuge for the workmen when attacks were made upon them by the Arab tribes. Another inscription (No. 7) portrays Kheops, the builder of the great pyramid at Gizeh, also of the IVth Dynasty, in the now conventional attitude of holding and slaying a defeated native. The same design is reproduced for Sahura of the Vth Dynasty (circ. 2743, reliefs numbered 8, 9). In all there are forty-five inscriptions in the Wadi Maghara recording the Egyptian occupation of Sinai and the working of the mines. The forty-fourth belongs to the reign of queen Hatshepsut, who revived the mines of Sinai, and king Thuthmose III of the XVIIIth Dynasty (circ. 1483 B.C.). The forty-fifth, relating to Rameses II of the XIXth Dynasty (1292–1225), is reported to have been seen by Ebers, but cannot now be found. No direct evidence exists of later use of the copper mines of Sinai, though it seems possible that the workings were continued. The turquoise mines are worked to the present day.

Further east in the peninsula is the Ṣarbuṭ el-Khadem "the hill of the castle", on the flat top of which is an Egyptian temple to Hathur with many inscriptions.[7] Pillars were placed here by Menuhotep of Dynasty XI and Sesostris I of Dynasty XII; the temple was built in the XIIth Dynasty and enlarged in the XVIIIth. Near by, in the Wadi Naṣb are copper mines[8] which were worked from the time of Sneferu of the IIIrd Dynasty.

Inscription No. 47 relates to Amenemhat II of Dynasty XII, when evidently the mines were being worked vigorously: Nos. 58, 59, 60 refer to Thothmes IV of Dynasty XVIII, and No. 61 is of doubtful date. The smelting furnaces were on the plateau where was also the temple in which the miners and overseers met to celebrate their festivals. Most of the monuments were set up by officials who desired to record their names, the success of their operations, and the difficulties with which they had to contend. In the Wadi, near the mines, were the storehouses and the miners' dwellings. Some of the mines are still not exhausted.

The road across Sinai thus opened by the Egyptians in the search for copper, continues across the northern Hijâz and so connects with the road through Teima to Babylon, and with that down the Hijâz to Yemen. At a later period the former of these routes seems to have been the subject of contention between Egypt and Assyria, and it was this perhaps which led to wars between these two powers in southern Palestine.[9] As to the road down the Hijâz we have less knowledge. Well down that road there was an Egyptian colony where afterwards rose the city of Yathrib (Medina), but there seems no evidence as to when it was founded. Certainly the northern Hijâz must have been in touch with Egypt at a very early date, and Egyptian influences may well have filtered down even before the formation of a regular caravan route through the Hijâz. Sir H. H. Johnson conjectures[10] that the great dams and irrigation works in South Arabia may have originated with the ancestors of the dynastic Egyptians, but they may equally well be due to Mesopotamian influence: all we can say is that they belong to the "river valley" type of culture. Sculptures found in Arabia show traces of both Egyptian and Akkadian influence[11] and so it is not an unreasonable suggestion that both cultural influences had penetrated the land at a very early date. Certainly Egypt had connexion with South Arabia across the Red Sea and drew

thence the incense which was required for the services of the temples and the embalming of the dead, but this contact seems to have been purely commercial, there is no evidence of any Egyptian invasion of South Arabia; and certainly also it prevailed in Sinai and was in touch with the northern Hijâz. Still further north, i.e. in the Syrian desert, which is an integral part of Arabia, Egyptian influence passed freely and king Thutmose I, who claimed the Euphrates as the boundary of his kingdom, according to his inscription on the walls of the temple at Karnak, must have regarded that desert as lying within his dominions. The name *Muṣur*, *Miṣr*, used to denote Egypt in the Akkadian inscriptions is so used as to include North Arabia and even Syria,[12] clearly showing that before the advance of Assyrian power those lands were generally recognized as Egyptian, whilst various remains of Egyptian occupation have been discovered in Palestine,[13] but the absence of inscriptions recording any conquest, prior to the XVIIIth Dynasty, suggests that the earlier occupation came rather by peaceful penetration and commercial enterprise than by military conquest. That came later when it had become obvious that the Semites were very dangerous neighbours and it was felt necessary to take measures to prevent the repetition of such invasion as had produced the Hyksos dynasty. But long before the era of conquest there was such peaceful penetration and relics of Egyptian influence of the XIIth Dynasty are the earliest traces of foreign civilization which have so far been found in Palestine. We have no definite proof that Egyptian influence then spread down into Arabia, but when the time of conquest came the Egyptians secured control of the roads leading from the isthmus of Suez to Palestine, and North Arabia was commonly described as a part of Egypt. Then, at least, if not earlier, Egyptian influence must have penetrated North Arabia.

(c) *Egyptian Use of Incense*

In spite of the abundant and now well-classified material for Egyptian history, there are still gaps in our knowledge which we can only bridge over by conjecture, though in some cases circumstantial evidence raises the level of conjecture to that of high probability. Our earliest historical information shows a very fully developed civilization already in full vigour: we have no direct knowledge of how this civilization arose and took shape. So in the matter of intercourse with Arabia: our first historical evidence shows traces of trade with Arabia, but we have no information as to how this trade first commenced.

One of the most important items of circumstantial evidence is connected with the incense trade. Incense was used in Egypt in the embalming of the dead, and in the ritual of the temples and of the burial of the dead. The art of embalming the dead arose in the course of Dynasties III–IV (circ. 3000–2750 B.C.), but was still in rare use in Dynasty VI, and had not become general by the XIIth Dynasty: after that it came into use for all save the poorer classes. It is based on the use of natron as a preservative and the careful removal of those organs which are most liable to rapid decomposition: the natron was procured from the Wadi n-Natrun on the west of Lower Egypt, but at an early date it became customary to add spices which were procured from South Arabia. As time went on the ceremonial use of these spices developed very greatly: they were used in embalming and were burned in the funeral rites and in the ritual of the temples. The ritual use of incense is characteristic of Egyptian culture to such an extent that no such use of incense is known in any other country, at any period, which cannot be traced directly or indirectly to Egypt. Now Herodotus who knew Egypt when the temples were still in full life, says that "Arabia . . . is the only country where are found frankincense, myrrh, cassia, cinnamon, and ledanon",[1] and we have the evidence of inscriptions to show that incense was obtained

for the temples from the Minaeans and Sabaeans of South Arabia.[2] It is true that incense was amongst the articles brought by sea from Punt which lay to the south, probably Somali-land,[3] but this seems to have been a later discovery and is noted rather as a novelty ; and later on Theophrastes tells us that the Arabians obtained their best incense from islands subject to their rule [4] : but the fact remains that incense was first obtained from Arabia and from Arabia alone, and to the later period passed through Arabia. Wherever, then we find incense used in ancient times there we are sure there must have been trade with Arabia.

Diodorus Siculus says that gold was obtained from Arabia, and Halévy says that he saw traces of gold washings in Arabia, a statement vehemently denied by others.[5] Whether gold was or was not found in Arabia, it is certain that the ancient world obtained gold from Arabia, though very possibly it came there from the African coast.

NOTES TO CHAPTER II

(*a*) *Nautical Enterprise of the Egyptians*

[1] J. de Morgan, *La Prehistoire Orientale*, 1925, i, ch. vi.

[2] Pre-dynastic vases in the Brit. Mus., e.g. Nos. 35, 324, reproduced in Budge, *Hist. of Egypt*, i, 80. Cf. Petrie, *Arts and Crafts of Anc. Egypt*, 1923, fig. 67; J. de Morgan, *Recherches sur les origines de l'Égypte*, 1896–*l*, i, pl. x, etc.

[3] For Seneferu's expedition see Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt*, i, 146.

[4] A. Weigall, *Antiquities of Upper Egypt*, 1910, 48.

[5] Inscr. in Lepsius, *Denkmäler*, iii, 139–41. Ground plan of the mines and quarries in Turin pap. pub. Chabas, *Les mines d'or*, 1862 (coloured facsimile). Cf. A. H. Gardiner in *Cairo Scientific Journal*, viii, 41 (analysis of the plans).

[6] L. Borchardt, *Grabdenkmal des Königs Sahure*, Leipzig, 1910. Cf. A. Köster, *Schiffahrt und Handelsverkehr des östlichen Mittelmeeres*, Leipzig, 1924 (esp. p. 11, where a picture of one of the ships is given).

[7] Petrie, *Hist. of Egypt*, i, 71, ref. to J. de Morgan, *Monuments et inscr.*, i, 38; but Weigall, *Guide to Ant. of Upper Eg.*, 394, note 1, says he has been unable to find the inscription.

[8] Couyat et Montet, *Inscript. du Ouadi Hammamat*, Le Caire, 1912. Maspero, *Ann.*, iii, 193, for details of the route.

[9] Golénischeff, *Les papyrus hieratiques nos.* 1115, 1116, A., *et* 1116 B. *de l'Érmitage Imp. à St. Pétersbourg*, 1913, vol. i.

[10] Cf. note 8 above.

[11] Hdt. ii, 108.

[12] Newberry, *Beni Hasan* (Egypt Exploration Fund), i, 25, 26; ii, 15–16. Of the three voyages recorded the second was to obtain gold for Ustersen I.

[13] Cf. above. At Aswân also stele of Mer-en-ra of VIth Dynasty, cf. *Rec. des Trav.*, xv, 147.

[14] Naville, *Deir el Bahari* (Egypt Explor. Soc., Excavation Memoir, No. xvi), 1898, pl. lxix–lxxxvi. Cf. J. Dümichen, *Flotte ein. Aeg. Königin*, Leipzig, 1868, pl. ii, xvii, xviii, xix, where reference will be found to incense " from Arabia ".

[15] Hdt., ii, 158.

[16] Plin., *NH.*, 6, 29, 33. Diod. Sic., 1, 33.

[17] Stele of Thuthmose III in Cairo Museum, and annalistic inscriptions on walls of temple of Karnak.

[18] Cf. Legrange, *Études sur les religions sémitiques*, 2nd ed., ch. i.

(*b*) *Land Route by Sinai*

[1] Dr. Myres in *Cambridge Anc. History*, i, 90. Cf. K. Sethe, " Hitherto unnoticed evidence regarding copper works of art of the oldest period of Egyptian History," in *Journal Eg. Arch.*, 1914, 233–6, showing that early dynastic period was of the stone age, but then and earlier copper was used in works of art. The transition from flint to copper was incomplete at the beginning of the dynastic period.

[2] Gardiner and Peet, *Inscriptions of Sinai*, 1917 (Egypt Expl. Soc., Excavation Memoirs), pl. xv, gives a plan of the Wadi and marks the position of the mines and inscriptions, forty-five in all. Peet, " Sinai as known to the Egyptians " in *J. Manch. Or. Soc.*, 1913–14, 20.

[3] Gardiner and Peet, op. cit., No. 1.
[4] Bénédite in *Recueil*, xvi, 104.
[5] Gardiner and Peet, op. cit., No. 2.
[6] Ibid., Nos. 3, 5.
[7] Ibid., Nos. 62–344. Inscr. 62 of Dynasty IV is dubious, 63–132 of Dynasty XII, 133–70 of the Middle Kingdom, 272, etc., of Dynasty XX and later.
[8] Ibid., Nos. 47–61.
[9] S. Smith, *Babylonian Historical Texts*, Lond., 1894, pp. 80–1.
[10] In *J. R. Anthrop. Inst.*, xliii (1913), 382.
[11] Two bas reliefs of this type reproduced in Wilson, *Lands of the Bible*, ii, 747. One of those represented was presented by Capt. Miles of the Royal Asiatic Society.
[12] Includes Di-mash-qa, Damascus, Sargon Cyl., 13, 19, 34. Cf. *Keil*, 2675, *O* 2, ii, 53, *b* 34.
[13] Cf. Vincent, *Canaan d'apres l'exploration récente*, pp. 428–35.

(c) *Egyptian Use of Incense*

[1] Herdt., iii, 107, 1.
[2] Cf. inscr. on Minaean sarcophagus, No. 431 in Room N of the Museum of Egyptian antiquities at Cairo.
[3] Thus Queen Hatshepsut's inscr. at Deir el Bahari. Cf. *a* 14 above.
[4] Theophrastus, *Hist. Plant.*, 9, 4, 10.
[5] Diod. Sic., 2, 50.

CHAPTER III

MESOPOTAMIAN PENETRATION OF ARABIA

(*a*) *Early Contact between Egypt and Mesopotamia*

In Mesopotamia there were already both Semitic and non-Semitic inhabitants at the beginning of recorded history. Akkad in the north had the stronger Semitic element, but with them was a non-Semitic Sumerian race: in the south the Sumerians predominated. These Sumerians seem to have been migrants from Central Asia and connect with tribal groups south of the Sea of Aral. History describes the Semites as generally appearing from the west, i.e. from the desert highland between Mesopotamia and Syria. Apparently the Sumerian movement into Mesopotamia took place first, and then came the Semites, the larger body of these new-comers arriving in the north so as to cut off the Sumerians from their original home. As we have noted, the Syrian desert is an integral part of Arabia, and it was from that desert that the Semites descended into Syria and Mesopotamia. In the case of Syria it seems that the earlier inhabitants in the south were able to defend their country from invaders, but their northern neighbours were weaker and less warlike, and therefore the Semites entered the northern land earlier than the south. In precisely similar fashion the Israelites tried to enter Canaan from the south but were repulsed, and then came across the Jordan from the eastern desert. Probably there were like conditions in Mesopotamia, and so the Semitic invasion from the western desert fell earlier upon the north than upon the south. Some have supposed a Mesopotamian home for the Semites. In a sense this may be admitted,

if the Semites be indeed part of a larger community once more widely diffused but pushed back into the barren highlands of south-western Asia, and the Sumerian migration into Mesopotamia may have been one of the factors which brought about the segregation of the Semites, but in any case northern Mesopotamia was not in continuous Semitic occupation: those who afterwards founded the kingdoms of Agade and Assyria were invaders who entered Mesopotamia after the Sumerians were already there. The northern land of Akkad, where the Semitic element predominated, came under the influence of Sumerian culture, though not perhaps to the extent commonly assumed, and it seems that the Sumerian culture itself had an earlier source in an Elamite parent, though the Sumerians introduced elements of their own which show a cultural community with Turkestan, presumably their earlier home. Thus the whole population of Mesopotamia was a mixed one, and we can say no more than that it was predominantly Semitic in the north, and less Semitic in the south, but there was a constant drifting of Semites, that is, of Arabs, across the western frontier and this very often resulted in their settling in with the older inhabitants and adopting their culture.

So long as such drifting took place there could have been no effective barrier between Akkad-Sumer and the Arabs; there must have been intercourse between the Arabs and the settled community, and with this may be assumed a degree of cultural influence exercised by the settled community upon the nomadic tribes. We can assume with confidence that already in prehistoric times there was Sumerian influence amongst the Arabs, whilst on the other side of the desert the nomadic tribes frequently went across the border into Egypt and temporarily settled there, especially in times of famine. If, therefore, there was any kind of intercourse between Mesopotamia and Syria, it is probable that North Arabia was a meeting place of the two cultures, the Arabs its carriers, and this would date back to a time prior

to the formation of definite roads of communication between the two settled countries.

Our earliest evidence of a trade route shows one which does not go across the desert at all, but makes a wide detour to the north. From Mesopotamia it passed up the Euphrates to the mountainous country beyond the apex of the Syrian desert, then turned west, and inclined south until it reached the Syrian coast and so came down to Gaza and finally entered Egypt by the Pelusiac side of the Delta. By this route, apparently, the " Armenoid " race from the region about Mount Ararat entered Egypt, and as they also went down into Mesopotamia, it is probable that this route was first opened up by them, hence the curve round the upper part of the desert. It seems likely that the first knowledge of copper, both in the valley of the Nile and in that of the Tigris-Euphrates, came through these " Armenoids ", and that the earliest copper supply was derived from the mountains north of the Syrian desert: so it is just possible that the opening of that route was in some way connected with the beginning of the copper age.

Very early intercourse, much prior to the copper age, seems to be beyond question. Evidences appear in the close similarities between the mace-heads used in pre-dynastic Egypt and in early Mesopotamia, articles peculiar to the older cultures of the Nile and Tigris-Euphrates valleys: in the common use of seal cylinders, though in Egypt these became obsolete in Dynasty XVIII, whilst in Babylonia they remained in use to later times; in common *motifs* of decoration, especially in the winged animals portrayed ; in very close parallels between Sumerian and Egyptian religious beliefs; in the methods of reckoning dates and measuring the year, and in other items of culture, of which some details might be regarded as merely accidental resemblances but which form a sum total of convincing weight. These are not similarities dating from historic times when we know that there were trade routes in use and frequent

intercourse across the desert, but of the early Sumerian age on the one side and the pre-dynastic period on the other, so that we are led to the inevitable conclusion that there was close and constant intercourse between the two at a remote prehistoric period and this implies a passage across the deserts of Arabia and contact with their nomadic inhabitants.[1]

(b) Ma-Gan and Me-Lukh-kha

Our first evidence of intercourse between Mesopotamia and Arabia arises indirectly from the circumstances connected with the foundation of the kingdom of Agade. Sargon, a Semitic priest of the cult of Ur-Ilbaba, who was a deified king of Kish, raised a rebellion in the north country where the Semites were in the majority and thus founded a new kingdom at Agade about 2870 B.C. He was one of the earliest empire builders and extended his dominions from Elam to the shores of the Mediterranean.[1] Such expansion westwards was no doubt largely designed to deal with the ever-present menace of the neighbouring desert and its nomadic inhabitants, who also were of Semitic race. By this expansion he was brought into direct contact with the Arabs of the Syrian desert and no doubt kept open and policed the roads of communication across the desert into Syria. Indirectly this advance westwards tended to bring about a conflict with Egypt which had already made a movement towards Syria, and thus led to the opening up of military roads between Mesopotamia and Egypt.

Sargon was succeeded by his son Rimush, who was in turn followed by his son Manishtesu, and he in 2795 by his son Narâm-Sin who very greatly extended the conquests of the founder of the dynasty and has left records celebrating his victory over Manium the Lord of Magan.[2] From this point we find ourselves involved in controversies which have surrounded the attempts to identify this land of Ma-gan, as well as Me-lukh-kha, which we soon begin to find associated with it. If these

denote places in Arabia we have there, of course, direct evidence of contact between Arabia and the earlier states in Mesopotamia, but we must consider whether such identification is reasonably probable. Immediately after J. de Morgan's discovery of Naram-Sin's statue at Susa with the inscription celebrating this victory the suggestion was made that Manium stands for Men, the founder of the first dynasty of Egypt, a theory which was revived and defended by Dr. Albright in 1920.[3] It has, however, serious difficulties, chronological and other, and it is peculiarly difficult to explain the total absence of reference to any such event in the Egyptian records.

Amongst the southern neighbours of Agade one of the most important was the city of Lagash, of course Sumerian, where ruled a line of kings who were also "patesis" or pontiffs. Of these the greatest was Gudea, who ascended the throne about 2600 B.C. and has left many evidences of his piety and literary abilities. He built a temple of Nin-gir-su, or perhaps rebuilt it, in Lagash and has recorded the fact that for this work he procured wood from Magan and Me-lukh-kha, places which from this time forward we very often find associated.[4] In the low-lying marshy country of Sumer it was generally necessary to import timber and stone when required of any size, and it was from the mountains of Magan that he procured diorite and made statues of which a series of eleven still exist.[5]

It was suggested by Haupt[6] that Magan means Egypt including Sinai and that Me-lukh-kha denotes Ethopia, i.e. Nubia, the Egyptian Sûdân, Abyssinia, and Somaliland, but this, though undoubtedly true for later texts, i.e. the El-Amarna Letters and after, does not hold good for the earlier accounts.[7] Sargon of Assyria (circ. 722–705), in a geographical description of his dominions, says that it was 120 hour marches (biru) from the reservoir of the Euphrates (KUN ^{nar}Puratti) to Me-lukh-kha along the sea-coast.[8] The same king's inscriptions place Dilmun (Tilmun) 30 hour marches from the head of the Persian Gulf.

Now Dilmun is identified with the town afterwards called *Τύλος*,[9] and so corresponds with the position of the Bahrayn. At this rate Me-lukh-kha would be some 400 miles from about lat. 31°, i.e. about half-way down the coast to Oman. In the syllabaries which refer to species of dates from those lands the order is always Dilmun, Magan, Me-lukh-kha[10] and the same order is observed in lists of ships.[11] This suggests the conclusion that "Magan meant in all probability the fertile date country in the region of classical Gerrha, modern el-Hasa, and Meluḫḫa began shortly beyond Bahrein and included Oman . . . Ethopia was referred to as Meluḫḫa and West Arabia (including Sinai) as Magan only at a much later period."[12]

In the El-Amarna Letters Muṣur and Me-lukh-kha are grouped together and replace the Magan and Me-lukh-kha of earlier documents.[13] This *Muṣur*, by assimilation for *Maṣur* = Heb. *Maṣor* or *Miṣr*(*aim*), unquestionably denotes Egypt and the same appears in documents of Sennacherib (705 B.C., etc.).[14]

In the syllabaries of the seventh century B.C. we find various products of Magan recorded in addition to the special species of dates. Amongst these we find a special wood, Akkadian *musukkanu*[15] which has been identified with the *Acacia Seyal* which grows in Arabia and Egypt. But in neo-Babylonian inscriptions it is described as "an everlasting wood", very like the Hebrew *m'sukkan* (Isa. xl, 20), the wood "which does not decay" rather suggestive of cedar with which indeed it is actually classed in the botanical lists.[16] Another product is diorite which is not found in Sinai but occurs in the east desert of Egypt and in the south-east of Arabia.[17] We also read of *gi-zi* = Akkad. *kisu* (cf. Egyptian *g'sh*) which is explained as *qan maggan*, "the word for *qanu* in Magan" and so denotes a reed, but not papyrus as has been supposed. Also a species of pig known as *makkanu*, or "pig of Magan". But the identification of Magan with Sinai (included in Egypt) relies most on the description of Magan as a "mountain of copper",

it being known that Sinai was one of the chief sources of copper supply in ancient times. But this description occurs only in a late syllabary and would equally hold good for the Jebel Akhdar in Oman. Admitting the later applications of Magan to Egypt Prof. Langdon comes to the conclusion that there is no evidence of this application before 700 B.C. "It dwindles down in fact to two entries in syllabaries, the name for 'reed' in Magan and the 'pig of Magan'. These syllabaries, written in the seventh century B.C., are copies of originals dating from about 2300; but the late syllabaries frequently insert new words . . . When a syllabary of the seventh century states that the word for reed in Magan is *gizi* = *kisu*, the Egyptian *g³sh*, it is highly probable that the scribe is speaking in terms of the late period. The evidence for Magan = Egypt before the seventh century thus vanishes absolutely, and the evidence that it was a province on the Persian Gulf even in the eighth century is positive and irrefutable." [18]

We know that both Ma-gan and Me-lukh-kha were reached by sea, for ships brought timber from Ma-gan, Me-lukh-kha, Gubi, and Dilmun.[19] Regularly we find Dilmun, Ma-gan, and Me-lukh-kha classed together, and in this order,[20] whilst Tukulti-Ninurta, son of Shalmaneser I, in giving a list of his subject states, classes together Dilmun and Me-lukh-kha.[21] But Ma-gan and Me-lukh-kha were also reached by land, the former presumably in the case of Narâm-Sin's expedition, the latter definitely so stated by Sargon of Assyria's reckoning of the number of hour marches required to teach it (cf. above). This accessibility both by land and sea would satisfy a locus on the Persian Gulf.

Later, in the Amarna letters we find Me-lukh-kha used as equivalent to *kâshi* [22] which presumably represents the (later) Egyptian *kôsh*, Hebrew *kûsh* "Nubia" (cf. older Akkadian *kushu*). Both *Kâshi* and *Me-lukh-kha* are used to denote mercenary troops in Egyptian employ. In the later use of

Asurbanipal, etc., *Me-lukh-kha* certainly refers to Ethiopia, which was reached by the sea round the south of Arabia and so by a route passing by the country known by that name in earlier times: its people are described as *ṣalmûti* "black".[23] We can only conclude that the names Ma-gan and Me-lukh-kha were later extended to countries reached by ships which on their way touched and traded with the places to which those names were originally applied.

Amongst the products of Me-lukh-kha was *gug-gi-rin-e*, "the brilliant *gug* stone,"[24] but it is not at all clear what kind of stone is meant. The Akkadian word is *sam-tu*, which has been regarded as equivalent to the Hebrew *shoham* (Gen. ii, 12, etc.), but the meaning of the Hebrew word is not known: the lexicons suggest onyx or sardonyx which is found in Sinai and East Africa, but it is after all no more than a guess. Thureau-Dangin identifies it with the carnelian on the ground that this would justify the Sumerian and Akkadian adjective which suggests bright, red, etc. Langdon very justly remarks: "the only possible means of discovering what *gug* or *samtu* stone means is to find out more than we now know concerning the precious stones of south-eastern Arabia."[25] Gudea says that he brought gold dust from Me-lukh-kha[26]: "The gold of Meluḫḫa is certainly difficult to explain; in fact it cannot be explained."[27] There are gold mines in the Wâdi 'Ulâqi in the east desert of Egypt, but these were not worked until the time of Seti I of the XIXth Dynasty.[28] In earlier times Egypt procured its gold from Nubia and it came up by way of trade. It is quite as difficult to speak about gold produced in Arabia, even though Halévy says he saw traces of gold workings. The only thing we can suggest is that gold found its way across to Arabia from Africa at a very early date; at an early, but not impossibly remote period, there was land connexion between South Arabia and the Horn of Africa, and it is not incredible that early man may have navigated the dividing strait. In Graeco-Roman

times Arabia was famed as the land of gold, and gold was undoubtedly obtained thence, whatever may have been its original source.

In attempting to examine the etymology of the names as words of Semitic origin we are on very unstable ground and little good result seems to be obtainable. In the Amarna Letters and later documents the Akkadian for Egypt is *Muṣur*, probably by vowel assimilation from **Maṣur*, which may be akin to the Hebrew *Mᵉṣurah* (2 Chron. xi, 11 ; xiv, 5) meaning " a fortified place ". Popular etymology may have confused it with *miṣru* " boundary ", hence *Miṣr* [29] and Hebrew *Miṣraim* in the dual due to Egyptian influence, as Egyptians always spoke of the two kingdoms, i.e. Upper and Lower Egypt, which were united under one crown at the beginning of the dynastic period. Dr. Albright (op. cit.) supposes that this name dates from the building of the " Wall of the Princes " and that the earlier name used by the Semites was *Ma'an*, which is Hommel's conjecture as an equivalent of Magan [30] Hebrew *Ma'ôn* (Josh. xiii, 17) akin to *Ma'yân* " a place irrigated with fountains " (Ps. cxiv, 8), a place derivative in *ma-* from *'Ayn* " fountain ", the idea being that Egypt would be regarded by the Arabs as a fertile country and well watered. Prof. Sayce, who regards Magan as a name for Sinai, tends to connect it with Makna at the head of the Gulf of 'Aqaba.[31] Others again have inclined to see a connexion with Minaea = Ma'an. None of these suggested derivations seems very convincing. The name Me-lukh-kha may be from √ML', as Arabic ' = Akkad. *kh*, and so be akin to Arabic *mala'* " desert ", or from √MLḤ as in Hebrew *mᵉliḥah* " a salty place (and so unfertile) " (Job xxxix, 6 ; Ps. cvii, 34).

In spite of the very many problems, as yet unsolved, connected with these names, it seems clear that Dilmun, Magan, and Me-lukh-kha lay, in this order, along the Arabian coast of the Persian Gulf, the first corresponding with the modern Bahrain, but at a later date the second of these names was extended

to Sinai and the Red Sea coast of Egypt, and the last to Ethiopia. Confining ourselves to the earlier use, it is evident that the whole east side of Arabia was familiar to the Sumerians and Akkadians, both by land and sea, in the third millennium B.C. By land the route must have been very much the same as at the present day, along the ground between the coast and the *dehanâ*. Thus Oman was reached and access obtained to the more pleasant and fertile southern lands. Certainly there was a close cultural affinity between Mesopotamia and South Arabia, and this is borne out by philological kinship between Akkadian and the languages of the Minaean and Sabaean inscriptions, both indicating contact and intercourse of very ancient date.

(*c*) *The Assyrian Conquest of Arabia*

About 715 B.C. Sargon of Assyria found it necessary to deal with the tribes of Arabia, probably because they menaced the security of the trade routes from Yemen and Hadramaut. The tribes thus involved were the Khaiapa, Tamud, Ibadidi, and Marsimani. Of these the Tamud figure prominently in tradition and are presumably the Thamud of Qur. 7, 13, perhaps the "dwellers in the rock" of Qur. 15, 80, probably the *Θαμουδηνοί* of Diodorus Siculus (3,44), the *Thamudeni* of Pliny (*NH*. 6,28,32), and connected with the *Θαμυδηνοί* whom Ptolemy enumerates as dwelling inland, or else the *Θαμυδῖται* to whom he refers as coast dwellers (Ptol. 6, 7, 4, 21). Probably they are the troglodytes of al-Hejra and the Wadi l-Qura in North Arabia, the makers of those cave dwellings which can still be seen there. Sargon seems to have dealt firmly with the Arabs and brought them under strict control. Gifts were sent to him by Samsi, the queen of the Aribi (Arabs) in the northern desert, by It'amar of Saba', and from Egypt: this last seems to suggest either that Miṣr (Muṣur) is here again used to include the northern part of Arabia and perhaps also Syria, which was still regarded as an Egyptian province, or else that the Egyptians made some

terms by which they could share in the use of the trade routes policed by the Assyrians.

About 690 Sennacherib made a campaign in Arabia and in 676 Esarhaddon made a similar campaign and reduced the Aribi. Obviously the Sargonid kings made strenuous efforts to restore order in Arabia, but this was then, as it still remains, an impossible task: the utmost that was feasible was to police the trade routes and make punitive expeditions against the Arabs when they interfered with the caravans. It was never practicable to govern the country as a whole and the tribes, chafing under any attempt to restrain their movements, were always ready to join any enterprise against the Assyrians. So we must interpret the negotiations between Babylon and Hezekiah of Jerusalem related in 2 Kings xx, 12–19, a passage which evidently refers to an attempted alliance between Merodach-Baladan and Hezekiah, who was a typical chieftain of a settled group of Arabs, with the object of resisting the menacing advance of Sargon's power. Sargon actually attacked Babylon in 710 and reduced it in the following year, so that these negotiations probably took place shortly before 710. The noteworthy point is that the Babylonian embassy presumably could not use the routes now policed by Assyria and so we must suppose that it passed across to Judah with the help and connivance of the Arab tribes in the intervening desert.

About 648 Ashurbanipal began to exercise a stricter control over Arabia and this provoked a general rebellion in which the revolted tribes were united under the Na-ba-ai-ti,[1] perhaps the נביות of the Old Testament (Gen. xxv, 13, etc.) as Josephus suggests (*Antiq.* 1, 12, 4). But this was firmly put down and between 641 and 638 Ashurbanipal sent a strong force into the land of the Hittites and reduced Zidon and its dependent fortresses, Ushu (Palmyra) and Akku (Acre) which commanded the Arab trade routes. On this Ashurbanipal says that "in my first expedition to Magan and Me-lukh-kha I went", here

obviously denoting Sinai and Arabia, the king of Arabia " caused the people of Arabia to revolt with him ", but " I destroyed with the sword all the people of Arabia who came with him ".[2] Ashurbanipal claims that all the kings of the west country (Martu), including Hezekiah of Jerusalem, made submission.[3] Under Assyrian rule, therefore, the trade routes were more strictly policed than had previously been the case and this was only done by means of frequent military expeditions into Arab territory.

(d) Taima

An inscription of Tiglath Pileser IV[1] refers to Te-ma-a-a, which is associated with Ma-as-a-a-a and Sa-ba-a-a. No doubt this Te-ma-a-a is the תֵּימָא of Gen. xxv, 15 (= 1 Chr. i, 30) Isa. xxi, 13, 14; Jer. xxv, 23, and *CIS.*, 113 (*b*) 3,a place frequented by caravans travelling between Egypt and Assyria (cf. Job, vi, 19), the تَيْمَاء of the Arabic writers, and the Θέμμη of Ptolemy (5, 19, 6), a town in an oasis in the Northern Hijâz. This town was so situated as to control the trade route from the Hijâz to Syria and that between Egypt and Mesopotamia. An inscription cited by Cooke[2] shows that Assyrian and Egyptian influences were both felt there. It seems to have been the aim of the Assyrian kings to get control of these routes and S. Smith suggests that it was largely the resultant jealousy which led to Egyptian interference in Palestine,[3] but the decline of Egypt as an imperial power after the XXth Dynasty left Assyrian influence supreme in North Arabia.

In 552 B.C. the last Babylonian monarch Nabonidus made a campaign against Taima, which is described as being in Amurru, i.e. in the west country, the home of the Semites, built a palace there and settled in it with a body-guard of Babylonians and Syrians at least until 544. In 540–539 Cyrus conducted a campaign in Arabia which is described as an effort to drive out the Nabataeans (i.e. Arabs) from Taima.[4] Apparently Taima

was the last part of the Babylonian Empire to hold out against the Persian invaders.[5]

After the Persian conquest of Babylon it appears that no further attempt was made to control the Arabs, for Herodotus says: "The Arabians were never in servitude to the Persians, but became allies after allowing Cambyses a passage to Egypt, for if the Arabians had been unwilling to do so the Persians could not have made their invasion of Egypt." [6]

At an early date, therefore, the rulers of the settled communities in Mesopotamia had begun to penetrate Arabia for purposes of trade and were compelled to make military expeditions in order to keep open the trade routes and secure their safety. As a result Mesopotamian influence was spread along the north, east, and south of the Arabian peninsula, and in the south, the part which offered most attractions to colonists, a local civilization grew up which shows a Mesopotamian colour, a subject which will engage our attention in the next chapter. This South Arabian culture was in decay in the later pre-Islamic period, but it had left very definite traces and indirectly did much to prepare the community in which Islam was developed.

NOTES TO CHAPTER III

(*a*) *Early Contact between Egypt and Mesopotamia*

[1] S. Langdon, " Early Chronology of Sumer and Egypt and the similarities of their cultures," in *J. Eg. Arch.*, vii (1921), 133–53. Hall, *Egypt and W. Asia in the light of recent discoveries*, 1907. L. W. King, " Some new examples of Eg. infl. at Nineveh," in *JEA.* (1914), 107–9, 237–40 (fourteenth century and later).

(*b*) *Magan and Me-lukh-kha*

[1] King, *Chronicles concerning early Babylonian Kings* (1907), ii, 3 seqq. Grossmann-Ungnad-Ranke, *Altorientalische Texte* (1909), i,105 seqq. An account tablet from Tello is dated " the year in which Sar-Gani-sharri (= Sargon) conquered the Amurru (= west country) in Basar." Cf. King, *Sumer and Akkad*, p. 225.

[2] *ma-gan*^{ki} (*sag-gish-ra* =) *inar u ma-ni-*( ) *bel ma-gan*^{ki}*shu-GAB-*( ) = he besieged Magan and defeated Mani(um) lord of Magan. (Statue A, found at Susa. Text in F. Thureau-Dangin, *Sumer. u. Akkad. Königinschriften* (1907), p. 166, h. 2. *na-ra-am*^{ilu}*-sin shar ki-ib-ra-tim ar-ba-im purum* (*nam-ra-ag* =) *shallat ma-gan*^{ki} = Naram-Sin, king of the four quarters of the world. A stone vessel. Booty from Magan. (Vase B found by the " Expédition en Mesopotamie ", Thureau-Dangin, op. cit., 164, 2c.)

[3] Albright in *J. Eg. Arch.*, vi (1920), 89, questioned by Professor Sayce, ib., 296; defended by Dr. Albright in *JEA.*, vii (1921), 80–6. Decisive treatment by Langdon in " Early Chron. of Sumer. and Egypt," in *JEA.*, vii (1921), 133–53.

[4] *ma-gán me-lukh-kha kur-bi-ta gú-gish mu-na-ab-gál* = Magan and Me-lukh-kha collected timber in the mountain. Gudea cylinder A. 15 in Thureau-Dangin, op. cit., 104, 15.

[5] *kur má-gán*^{ki}*-ta* ^{dag}*-esi im-ta-ĕ alan-na-ni-shu mu-tu(d)* = From the mountains of Magan he brought diorite and made a statue therewith. Gudea Statue A, Thureau-Dangin, 66, 16, a, 2. The same words on Gudea Statue B, Thureau-Dangin, 72, 1, and on Gudea Statue C, ib., 76, 5, cf. Statue D, note 19 below.

[6] In *O.L.Z.*, xvi, 488–92.

[7] Cf. Langdon in *JEA.*, vii (1921), 133–53.

[8] 120 *biru shi-id-du ishtu KUN*^{nar} *puratti adi pat* ^{mat}*me-lukh-kha.* Shroeder, *Keilinschr. verschiedenen Inhalts*, No. 92.

[9] Or *Τύρος*, Strabo, 16, 3.

[10] A.O. 2131, obv. 6–10, in *Rev. Assyr.*, vi.

[11] *Assyr. Lesest.*, (3), 88, v. 5–7.

[12] Langdon, op. cit. (note 8), 144. Cf. Hommel, *Grundriss*, ii, 126, etc. Magan = East Arabia, Me-lukh-kha = Central and N.W. Arabia.

[13] *mi-iṣ-ri-u* ^{mat}*me-lukha. Tell el-Amarna Tafeln* (Berlin coll.), 50. 0. 20.

[14] Sennacherib II. (73) *sharra* ^{mat}*mu-su-ri* (74) *shar* ^{mat}*me-lukh-kha* (80) *shar* ^{mat}*mu-ṣu-ra-a-a* (81) *shar* ^{mat}*me-lukh-khi.* Rawlin, *Cuneif. Insor. of W. Asia* (1861), i, 37–42. Muṣran = Minaean colony of el-'Ôla (Hommel, *Grundriss*, ii, 603), Muṣran = Midian (Glaser, *Skizze*, ii, 452).

[15] *miš-na-kan-na*, Assurbanipal in Rawlinson, i, 17–26. Stand 18 = *GISH-MESH-KAN-NA*, ib., v, 65, 6, 4. Cf. Sargon, *Annals*, 429, cyl. 63. Rawlinson, i, 36.

[16] *Mitt. Vorderas. Ges.* (1913), 2, p. 21.

[17] Cf. note 6, above.

[18] Langdon, op. cit., p. 149.

[19] *ma-gan*^{ki} *me-lukh-kha*^{ki} *gu-bi*^{ki} *kur NI-TUG*^{ki} *gu-gish mu-na-gál-la-ám má gish-dú-a-bi SHIR-BUR-LA*^{ki}*-shú mu-na-gin khar-sag má-gán*^{ki}*-ta d*^{aa}*esi im-ta-ĕ alan-na-shú* = Magan, Melukhkha, Gubi, and Tilmun (= *kur NI-TUG*) collected timber, ships with timber came to Lagash; from the mountain of Magan he brought diorite for a statue. Gudea, Statue D, Thureau-Dangin, 78, *d*, 4.

[20] Cf. King, *Cuneiform Tablets*, xv, 44. Langdon, *Sumerian Liturgical Texts*, No. 1, obv. col. 2 (*Ma-*)*gan*^{ki}*-na an-zaga ġe-en-lal* (. . . *ma-*)*gi-lum me-luġ-ga*^{ki}*-a-gé* = May he reach Magan on the horizon of heaven . . . barks of Me-lukh-kha. Rawlinson, *Cuneif. Inscr. W. Asia*, iv, 25, col. i.

[21] Cf. Inscr. of Tukulti-Ninusta cited in *Camb. Anc. Hist.*, vol. ii, p. 242.

[22] *amēlūti* ^{mât}*kashi*, El-Amarna Tab. (B. Mus.), 24, 9, etc. E. Schrader, *Keil. Bibl.*, vol. v; Knudtzon-Weber, *Die el-Amarna Tafeln*, pp. 1154, etc., 1578.

[23] *me-lukh-khe ṣalmūti*, Jessen in Winckler, *Alt-Orient. Forsch.*, ii, 578.

[24] *gug-gi-rin me-lukh-kha-da*, Gudea cyl. B. 14, Thureau-Dangin, 134, line 14.

[25] Langdon, op. cit., 150.

[26] *gushkin sakhar-ba kur-ne-lukh-kha-ta im-ta-ĕ* = gold dust he brought from Me-lukh-kha. Gudea Statue B. 6, Thureau-Dangin, p. 70, lines 12–13.

[27] Langdon, op. cit., 150.

[28] Cf. note *a* 5 on Chap. II above.

[29] Cf. Amarna letters cited note 13 above.

[30] Hommel, *Grundriss*, i, 132.

[31] In *JEA.*, vi (1920), 296.

(*c*) *Assyrian Conquest of Arabia*

[1] Cylinder of Ashurbanipal, *Keil. Bibl.*, ii, 216–22.

[2] Asurbanipal, *Ann.*, i, 51–2; vii, 112–13; viii, 2–3, 45–6.

[3] Taylor Cylinder, cols. ii, iii. Cf. Rawlinson, i, 37–42. *JRAS.* (1859), 135, etc.

(*d*) *Taima*

[1] Rawlinson, *Cuneif. Inscr. of W. Asia*, 10, No. 2, 38 seqq.

[2] Cooke, *North Semitic Inscr.*, pp. 195–9.

[3] S. Smith, *Babylonian Historical Texts*, 80–1.

[4] Josephus, *c. Apionem*, i, 21; Xenophon, *Cyrop.*, vii, 4, 16.

[5] Cf. S. Smith, *Bab. Hist. Texts*, Lond., 1924; R. P. Dougherty, "Nabonidus in Arabia," in *J. Amer. Or. Soc.*, xlii, 305–16.

[6] Herodotus, 3, 88, 2; cf. Xen. *Cyrop.*, 1, 1, 4, 5, 2; 6, 2, 10.

Additional Note to Chapter III

Hawilah and the Source of Gold Supply

Noting that Me-lukh-kha was a land from which it was reported that gold was procurable it is easy to suggest some connexion with the *Ḥ*^{a}*wîláh* of Gen. x, 29, which is described as a land of gold (Gen. ii, 11), and elsewhere is classed as a land of the Cushites (Gen. x, 7), i.e. in Africa (or North-West Arabia, cf. Hommel, *Grundriss*, ii, 557, etc.). It is also famed for *bᵉdólaḥ* (Gen. ii, 12) which Josephus renders βδέλλα corresponding to the βδέλλιον of Dioscorides,

1, 80, and the *bdellium* of Pliny, *NH.*, xii, 9–10, and denotes a fragrant gum, a species of resin like myrrh. This would seem to point to South Arabia, though not necessarily so as Theophrastus tells us that some of the best incense is reported to come, not from the peninsula of Arabia, but from adjacent islands under Arabian rule, and it is possible that the Alexandrian philosopher, writing from hearsay, means some other places reached across the sea and so possibly East Africa from which incense was obtained as well as from Arabia. If so, it is a possible conjecture that *Ḥᵃwîlâh* = Avalites, whence particularly good myrrh was obtained (Pliny, *NH.*, b. 28; Ptolemy, iv, 7), Avalites pointing to Zeila on the African coast near the Bab el-Mandeb. But possibly *Ḥᵃwîlâh* is from (Arab.) √ *HWL* "go round", and so denotes "coast". Dr. Albright (in *JEA.*, 1921, 84) suggests the derivation *bedôlah* from **bedulkh* < **malukha* = *me-lukh-kha*, so as to make this latter denote "land of incense", and notes on the authority of Glaser that resin is still called *amlokh* in Dofar. In Mordtmann und Müller, *Sab. Denkmäler*, 36, we find "Saba' wa-'Ariban", which possibly corresponds with "Saba' wa-Ḫawilan" in Glaser 1155 = Halévy 535: if so, Ḫawilan may be but another name for 'Ariban, "the land of the Arabs" (?), and both refer to South Arabia.

King Solomon's navy on the Red Sea is said to have brought gold and silver, ivory, apes, and peacocks (1 Kings x, 22). This might refer to a trade with Punt, but for the peacocks which are not a product of Africa. As there evidently was navigation round Arabia and the Babylonian ships traded with the Red Sea, it seems likely that these peacocks might have been procured from Babylon where, we are told by Diod. Sic., 2, 53, they were bred, though procured from India in the first place. It is difficult to avoid here some passing reference to the problematical *'Ôphîr*, to which reference is made as a source of gold in 1 Kings ix, 28; Job xxviii, 16; Ps. xlv, 10, etc., and which is associated with the African Saba in Gen. x, 29. Possibly it is the Ḫapir of Rawlinson, iv, 34, Nos. 3, 3, 5.

The "ivory, apes, and peacocks", as the words are interpreted in the Targums, Peshitta, Vulgate, and the Rabbinical commentators have always been felt to present difficulty. The lxx renders "gold and silver and engraved and hewn stones", save in Cod. A of 1 Kings x, 22, which agrees with the Targums, etc. It has been conjectured that שנהבים "ivory" may contain a corruption of הבני "ebony", and if the passage should read "gold and silver, and ebony, and cut and hewn stones", the cargoes brought to Solomon would be very like those which Gudea obtained from Magan and Me-lukh-kha. Or שנהבים might be an error for אבני שהם "onyx stones", or a combination of "ivory and ebony". But there are other conjectures, one of which makes תכיים = *sukhiyim* troglodytes, black slaves (Winckler in *OLZ.*, 1901, 148 sq.), and this seems to agree with the *Αἰθίοπες τε καὶ πίθηκοι* of Josephus *Antiq.*, viii, 7, 2 (181).

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CHAPTER IV

THE ROUTE TO INDIA

(*a*) *The Sea Route to India*

Arabia was distinguished as the Incense Country, but that was not its only, perhaps not even its chief, source of wealth. Besides sending its own produce of sweet spices to the West it was the medium through which merchandise from India commonly passed. The sea route between India and the Persian Gulf was opened up at an early date, probably by the Babylonians, perhaps by Indians in Babylonian days. Archaic Babylonian cylinders show representations of boats, indeed those who dwelt in such a land of rivers and canals must have been familiar with boats, and as we have already noted (p. 46 above), the navigation of the Persian Gulf and round the coasts of Arabia was already established in the days of Gudea of Lagash. It is easy to understand that those who could go down the west coast of the gulf and along Oman would be equally well able to go down the east coast and continue to the north-west of India, indeed this is very much the easier route. We have, however, no direct evidence of the use of this route until we reach the later Babylonian Empire, but it seems likely enough that it had been tried at an earlier date.

A coasting voyage eastwards from the Persian Gulf would bring a traveller to the mouth of the Indus and so to the great artery of the north-west, the Aryan speaking part of India. If seamen ventured further out, or were carried out, at certain seasons of the year the monsoons would drive them across in a south-easterly direction to the south-west coast of India, the Dravidian speaking country. It seems natural that the first mariners who made the voyage to India did so by coasting

cautiously along from the entrance of the Persian Gulf towards the mouth of the Indus, and this route was well known in, and probably well before, the period of Persian rule; but the open sea route seems to have been used at an early date also, probably discovered by accident, and in the later Babylonian Empire both routes were in use. Later, we can see the evidence of these two different lines of intercourse by the names of the articles brought over, those of Sanskrit origin proving trade with north India, those of Tamil origin, or derived from some other Dravidian language, proving intercourse with south India. Further, the articles brought over differed. Articles of southern origin could only have come by sea, those of northern origin might have come by sea or by land.

In the eighth century B.C. the Persian Gulf was infested by pirates, but about 694 Sennacherib put down these pests and compelled them to settle at Gerrha.[1] In ancient times it was generally believed that the Phoenicians came from these parts, and thus Herodotus says that "this people, who formerly dwelt on the shores of the Red Sea, having migrated to this sea and settling in the parts they now occupy, at once, it is said, began to undertake long voyages" (Hdt., 1, 1, 1–2). The term "Red Sea" is used by Herodotus in the widest sense to include all the parts of the Indian Ocean round Arabia, and "this sea" of course refers to the Mediterranean. Similarly Strabo says that "as one sails further (i.e. down the Persian Gulf from the mouth of the Shatt el-'Arab) there are other islands, Tyros (Tylos) and Arados, which have temples like those of the Phoenicians. The inhabitants claim that those islands and cities which belong to the Phoenicians were colonized from these" (Strabo, 16, 3, 4). But elsewhere he admits that there was a difference of opinion as to which of these was the original home of the Phoenicians: "some say that the Sidonians near us are colonists of those by the ocean, averring that they are called Phoenicians on account of the Red Sea, but others say

that those are colonists of these" (Strabo, 1, 2, 35). Justin, a weak authority, drawing from Pompeius Trogus says, "Tyriorum gens condita a Phoenicibus fuit qui terraemotu vexati relicto patriae solo Assyrium stagnum primo, mox mari proximum littus incoluerunt, condita ibi urbe quam a piscium ubertate Sidona appellaverunt" (Justin, 18, 3). There has been much discussion as to what this "Assyrium stagnum" means: Bunsen supposed that it was the Dead Sea, but A. v. Gutschmid (*Beitr. zur Gesch. des Orients*, 26) suggested rather Lake Bambyke. Heeren (*Researches* . . . Eng. trs. ii, 56) returned to the alternative opinion mentioned by Strabo and supposed that the Phoenicians on the Mediterranean were the parent stock from which those on the Persian Gulf were an offshoot, and this, though not proved, is a very possible theory.

In the Old Testament, as in the Assyrian records, those whom we call Phoenicians always appear as Sidonians (thus Judges x, 6, 12; xviii, 7; 1 Kings xvi, 31, etc.), which of course gives no clue to their race but refers only to a political group. Similarly Homer (*Iliad*, 6, 200; *Od.*, 15, 118; 4, 618) refers to Sidonians, but also speaks of them as "Phoinikes" in *Il.*, 23, 743; *Od.*, 13, 272; 14, 288, etc., which corresponds with the *Fnḫ* of the Egyptian inscriptions. This name was used by the Greeks for all the dwellers along the sea coast of Canaan and was applied also to the palm tree. The Greeks took it as being the adjective φοιν-ός "red" with the archaic formative -ικ, and the use of that name no doubt strongly influenced the theory that they came from the Red Sea. It is, however, a false etymology based on the Egyptian name. 1 Kings ix, 26–8, contains a tradition of Sidonian seamen penetrating to the Red Sea, but that of course does not disapprove a possible eastern origin of the Sidonians.

One at least of the Phoenician coast settlements, Antelias, belongs to the Magdalenian period and so to the late palaeolithic stratum, indeed we have every reason to suppose that these

coast settlements were amongst the earliest places of human occupation in Canaan. The pottery of those parts mostly shows an inferior imitation of Egyptian and Ægean models so that Phoenician culture presumably derives from the age of Egyptian conquest and from intercourse with Crete or with the Pulesati who were refugees from Crete. Either the Phoenician coast towns were in close contact with the Ægean before the fall of Knossus, or they admitted a strong Pulsati element which came up the coast after the decline of the Egyptian occupation. The Old Testament describes Solomon as procuring Phoenician help for the construction of the temple in Jerusalem, and as erecting fortresses in various towns in which also it seems probable that he received Phoenician help. Nothing remains of Solomon's temple and it is impossible to obtain any idea of its architecture from the description given in the Old Testament, though it may be assumed as having been a building on Egyptian and Cretan lines, but remains of some of the fortresses exist and show massive masonry and stones which are often drafted, a method of construction of which the country shows no earlier examples and so we may suppose that this is an instance of Phoenician influence.

In some way the Phoenicians connect with the Pulsati, Puresati, or Philistines who settled along the southern coast about Gaza, Askelon, etc., and these were the descendants of the sea tribes who had vexed Egypt in the days of Rameses III, and, when they were repelled from Egypt, had settled along the coast of Canaan which was then a weakly held province. Amos ix, 7, speaks of the "Philistines from Caphtor", and Jer. xlvii, 4, of "the Philistines, the remnant of the country of Caphtor", whilst Deut. ii, 23, refers to the Caphtorim as invaders of Canaan. Caphtor certainly is Keftiu or Crete, and the proto-Philistines were remnants of the old Ægean people whose early but well-developed culture was submerged by the Achaean invaders of Greece.[2] From their southern coast settlements

they tried to spread northwards and inland. The movement inland brought them into conflict with the Israelites, also recent invaders of Canaan and from the stress of that conflict the kingdom of Israel was evolved. Spreading northwards they seem to have formed new settlements and finally absorbed, or were absorbed in, the great commercial cities of Tyre and Sidon. Those cities already existed and were of considerable importance before the sea tribes had moved to the coast of Canaan. The Phoenicians were the inhabitants of Sidon and its colony Tyre, presumably the same who already occupied those cities, either Semitic immigrants or survivals of the pre-Semitic population, but apparently the sea tribes mingled with them and perhaps the maritime importance of the Sidonians dates from that mingling. The Pulsati migration took place in the XXth Dynasty of Egyptian history, but Thuthmose III of the XVIIIth Dynasty had made it an important part of his fifth campaign to get control of the Phoenician coast cities and in the time of king Amenhotep III the Amurru (Syrian Semites) made an attack upon the Phoenicians who were loyal to Egypt. The Khabiru, mentioned in the Amarna letters, who possibly were the Hebrews, certainly were Semites and they penetrated Phoenicia as well as Canaan. Certainly Sidon and its colonies were not founded by the Pulesati (Philistines), though they may have afterwards acquired a Pulesati element: the book of Judges i, 31, refers to the inhabitants of Sidon as settled Canaanites, not as new comers like the Caphtorim. Sennacherib refers to " great Sidunnu " as one of the Phoenician cities which submitted to him in his third campaign.[3] According to Gen. x, 15, Sidon (= the Phoenicians) and Heth (= the Hittites) were the two sons of Canaan, from which we infer that the writer regarded the Sidonians and Hittites as aborigines: in the latter case he was, of course, mistaken and we can hardly regard him as convincing in the former, but at any rate the Sidonians were not immigrants of recent date.

P. Legrange[4] supposes that there was a great westward movement of the Semites from the borders of the Persian Gulf which was the real cause of the Hyksos invasion of Egypt and of the Phoenician settlements along the Mediterranean coast. This does not bear directly upon the original home of the Semites but merely refers to a westward migration from Babylonia, largely a Semitic colony, due to the Kassite invasion which led to the downfall of the second Babylonian dynasty. This seems the most probable theory so far suggested. It is obvious that the Hyksos who invaded Egypt were no uncultured nomads, and Manetho records that Salatis, the first Hyksos king, fortified Avaris (= Tell el-Yahudiyyah ?) in the Delta because he feared attack from the "Assyrians" (i.e. the people of Mesopotamia, at the moment under Kassite rule).[5] We may suppose, perhaps, that the Phoenicians were Semites who migrated from Mesopotamia after the Kassite invasion, settled along the coast where there already were several ancient ports and cities, and there came under Egyptian and Ægean influences. This, of course, does not imply that they were the first Semitic invaders of Canaan, indeed Macalister proposes to date the earliest Semitic remains at Gezer as not later than the first half of the third millennium B.C., inclining to put back their oldest relics to the fourth millennium,[6] whilst the Hyksos invasion of Egypt was not earlier than the seventeenth century B.C.

An attempt has been made by W. J. Perry (*L'anthropologie*, Paris, xxix, 1918–19, 133) to connect the Phoenicians with the megalithic monuments spread across Europe and Asia which apparently coincide with lodes of metallic ore and precious stones or the neighbourhood of pearl oysters. This bold conjecture is interesting but is no more than conjecture. In fact we know next to nothing about the Phoenicians.

After the fall of the Assyrian empire in 606 Babylon revived and once more became a mart of cosmopolitan character. To the Indians it was known as Baberu, and we have an account

of Indian mariners there in a story which probably dates from the third century B.C., and, later on, it would appear, peacocks were bred in Babylon.[7]

That we know few details of the pre-Alexandrian sea route between India and Arabia is partly, no doubt, due to the fact that those who used it preferred to secure their monopoly by veiling their doings in strict secrecy, a method which the Phoenicians are known to have followed elsewhere.

(*b*) *The Land Route to India*

But India can also be reached by land, and this we have to take into account as a possible explanation of trade which we might otherwise assume had come by sea to the Persian Gulf and so reached the west through Arabia. By land there are four routes, (i) a road from the Caspian Sea to what is now Turkstan and then south, or south-east, through the passes of the Hindu Kush to the upper basin of the Indus ; (ii) a route east along the foot of the Elburz mountains and so to the Hindu Kush and to the Indus basin ; (iii) one across the Dash-i-Lut or great salt desert of Persia by Ghazni and so again to the north-west ; and (iv) one through Beluchistan and so the more southern part of the Indus valley. The last of these may be struck out immediately ; it is one of extreme difficulty, explored by Capt. Sykes in 1898 and possibly never used by anyone else, certainly it could never have been in general use as a means of commercial intercourse. The third, that through the Dash-i-Lut, may have been occasionally used, but could hardly have been much frequented : it is practicable only for small bands of hardy travellers, not burdened with much luggage, and its wells are bad and few. The only probable routes are those which passed along the base of the Elburz mountains or went across Turkistan further north, in either case passing through the passes of the Hindu Kush and entering India from the north-west, the way by which India has been invaded time after time.

Through the passes of the Hindu Kush the ancestors of the Hindu race entered India, an offshoot of the community spreading across north Central Asia. We find the Hittite inscriptions of the (Hittite) kings of Mitanni, dating from the fourteenth to the fifteenth centuries B.C. containing the names of Vedic deities,[1] and the Hittite archives of Boghaz Keui seem to prove that their language was of the "centum" not the "satem" type,[2] and so that they were akin to the Aryan group in Europe. By 1400, therefore, there were Aryans in the Upper Euphrates valley. This apparently is about the date of the Rig Veda and so presumably of the Aryan invasion of India. By 1000 Aryan names were extinct in Mitanni, suggesting a movement eastwards into N.W. India. But the pre-Aryan culture of N. India of the neolithic period, a type only discovered in 1924, shows connexion between pre-Aryan India and S. Mesopotamia, e.g. in the cylinder seals. Apparently the Aryans moving eastwards to the Hindu Kush and thereby into N.W. India were using a route already known and of great antiquity. This was not only a route of tribal migration but remained a route of continuous communication of which we find evidence in Homeric Greece and early Italy. The Greek ἐλεφαντ- "ivory" represents the Sanskrit *ibha danta* and occurs in Homer κασσίτερος "tin" from Skr. *kastîra* frequently in the Iliad (e.g. 11, 25) and we must connect Sanskrit *ibha* with Italic *ebur*. Such instances seem explained by an early cultural intercourse across Central Asia. The Brahmi script is undoubtedly derived from a Semitic source and, if this is correctly dated as coming into use about the seventh century B.C. it further endorses the theory of continuous intercourse, though the earliest extant Indian inscription dates only from the third century.

To the earlier Babylonians and Assyrians the lands about the Caspian were inaccessible because the inhabitants were hostile, and so the prehistoric route across Asia was unknown to them. Tribal movements had brought about invasions of

the Tigris-Euphrates valley by migrations southwards—probably the Sumerians had moved down this way from Central Asia and there was a culture drift from the Caspian at a later date, but the settled empires apparently made no attempt to penetrate these northern lands until the time of Tiglath-Pileser I (circ. 1100 B.C.) when the Medes were conquered. By this conquest the country was reached through which the overland route passed, but we have no evidence that the Assyrians penetrated any further and may assume that the revolt of Media (circ. 710) checked any further advance.

In the restored Babylonian Empire we find many evidences of intercourse with India which may have been by the land route or by sea, or more probably by both. Thus we find beams of teak used in the temple of the moon at Ur and in the palace of Nebuchadnezzar.

The road through Central Asia to India was opened up by the establishment of the kingdom of Persia, and, from the time of Cyrus (558–536) the Persians held control of Central Asia and the border land of India. Darius Hystaspes maintained regular intercourse with India and thence obtained supplies of gold. In 512–510 he sent the Greek mercenary Skylax to explore the route down the Indus, across the Indian Ocean and up the Red Sea to Arsinoe, near the modern Suez (Hdt. 4, 44). This suggests that the Persian monarch was investigating in detail a route already known by hearsay. Darius annexed the whole Indus valley and made it a satrapy of his kingdom. The earliest precise mention of the eastern possessions is found in the inscriptions of Darius at Persepolis and Naksh-i-Rustam, the latter probably dating from 486 B.C. There Darius claims to be "king of Persia, Susiana, Babylonia, Assyria, Arabia, Egypt, those of the sea, Sparta, Ionia, Media, Armenia, Cappadocia, Parthia, Zarangia, Aria, Chorasmia, Bactria, Sogdiana, Gandara, the Sacae, the Sattagydes, Arachosia, and Mecia ".[3] The Indian satrapy supplied Persia with gold obtained from

alluvial deposits in Dardistan which were exhausted within the following century, and it explains the presence of Indian archers in the army of Xerxes.[4]

But Darius only brought under political control a route already used by merchants. The obelisk of Shalmaneser III (860 B.C.) refers to apes, elephants, and camels, all showing commercial intercourse with Bactria and India. By the same route also cotton came west, and apparently the Hebrew *karpas*, which occurs only in the late vocabulary of Esther (i, 6), is a rendering of the Sanskrit *karpasa*.

As part of India was now included in the kingdom of Persia it was impossible for it to remain unknown to the Greeks, the less so because it was a Greek who had carried out the exploration for Darius. The earliest references go back to Hekataeus (circ. 520 B.C.) whose works are known to us only by citations. These represent information gained well before the time of Darius' survey and belong to the period of commercial intercourse before Persian imperial expansion. Next comes Herodotus (circ. 478) who gives information probably gained from Skylax and his companions, for Skylax was a native of the same province as Herodotus, and repeats legends which are recognized as derived from Indian sources.[5] Ktesias, a Greek physician in the employ of the Persian court, adds little to our information as he confined himself to repeating picturesque tales. Coins of the Indian satrapy of Persia have been found in the Panjab,[6] as well as very distinct traces of Persian influence in art and architecture.

(c) *Alexander*

It is hardly necessary to recount the events which revealed to the Greek world the weakness of Persia, and the causes which led Alexander to attack it. At the battle of Issus in 333 he defeated Darius who fled from the field, and at Arbela in 331 he defeated him again and shortly after Darius was assassinated.

Alexander now held the Persian empire and his expedition to India really was a visit to the eastern satrapy which, under the weak rule of the later Persian monarchs, had become quasi-independent. In this expedition he marched across territory which was all, at least nominally, part of the Persian kingdom and his conquests were bringing again under central control those provinces which had been allowed to go very much their own way. After reducing Bactria he crossed the Hindu Kush in 327, and in the following year reached the Indus. In all this he was not discovering new paths but reopening Persian roads which had fallen into disuse. In accordance with the precedent set by Darius Hystaspes he then turned back by the land route and sent a fleet down the Indus to make its way home by the Persian Gulf.

The voyage of Nearchus, who was in charge of the fleet on the Indus, is related by Arrian [1] and forms our earliest detailed description of the sea route between India and the Persian Gulf. Nearchus followed close along the coast of India and Beluchistan, usually going ashore each day before nightfall and spending the night in camp. From Mosarna on the coast of Gedrosia (Beluchistan) he was able to employ a pilot and the course is described as not being difficult and the names of the places well known.[2] This shows that the coasting route was then perfectly familiar and is strongly in favour of that being the ordinary way to and from India. It was understood that it was possible to sail round Arabia to the Red Sea and Alexander appointed a body of men to do this, but they were unable to get beyond the promontory opposite the coast of Carmantia, i.e. Ras Mussenden, and no further effort was made to explore Arabia or the Arabian coast.

(*d*) *The Division of Alexander's Empire*

The untimely death of Alexander prevented the consolidation of his conquests and the civil war amongst the rival generals

which followed gave an opportunity for the more distant conquests to recover their independence. By 315 Greek rule in the Panjab was at an end. In due course the rival Greek generals made a partition of Alexander's empire in which the Asiatic provinces fell to Seleucus Nicator (312–280) and in 302 he tried to recover the Indian satrapy.

Meanwhile, however, conditions in India had changed and led the way to an Indian penetration of the west, a reaction against the eastward movement of Hellenism under Alexander. A strong power had arisen in North-West India in the Maurya Empire founded by Chandragupta (Gk. Sandrakottos) and the Macedonians were unable to enforce their suzerainty and so contented themselves with an alliance. Chandragupta took as wife a daughter of the Seleucid family and received Greek envoys, amongst whom was Megasthenes who wrote a descriptive account of India, a work unfortunately known to us only by citations.

Some centuries before Alexander's invasion Buddhism had developed and spread in India, and some of our earliest information about it is derived through Megasthenes. In one place he says: "There are Indians who obey the precepts of Boutta and honour him as a god for his exceeding dignity." [1] The Brahmans, with strict caste rules, disliked and despised foreigners, but the Buddhists had no such feeling and were friendly to strangers. Chandragupta established his empire by usurping the throne of Magadha (Behar) and became ruler of all North India: of lowly birth he was despised by the Brahmans and for this reason turned to the Buddhists. His grandson Asoka, a contemporary of Antiochus II, was a devoted Buddhist and held the third general council of the Buddhist church at which it was resolved to send out missionaries to propagate Buddhism in other countries. Taking advantage of the intercourse established with the Greek world he sent missionaries through the Seleucid dominions and to the regions

beyond. The cave temples and rock carvings found in India and Afghanistan are mostly connected with this outburst of missionary activity, and the Pali inscriptions of Asoka, of which thirty-six are known in India, are our earliest documentary evidence of the family of Indian languages which begins with Sanskrit and ends with Urdu. These inscriptions were probably suggested by those already set up by Darius and the Persians. In them we find mention of Antiochus, Ptolemy of Egypt, Antigonus (Gonatas of Macedonia), Magas of Cyrene, and Alexander, probably the one who then ruled in Epirus. This Buddhist missionary work was only rendered possible by the existence of the land route across Central Asia, a route of which we must take note as being the medium of some Indian influence which we might otherwise suppose to have come through Arabia.

It is obvious that in Achaemenid and Seleucid times the land route across Asia was well known and in general use and it accounts for a great deal of the knowledge as well as the merchandise obtained from India. No doubt intercourse was checked by the revolt of Bactria (circ. 250) and that of Parthia in 248 which established an Asiatic power east of the Tigris, some years before the death of Asoka, but for all that the route remained in use though now controlled by the Parthians.[2]

(e) *The Ptolemies and the Red Sea*

The trade with India by the sea route was much encouraged by the Ptolemies of Egypt who were influenced mainly by the fact that the land route was in the hands of their great rivals the Seleucids of Syria. Ptolemy Philadelphus (circ. 274 B.C.) did much for this development: he restored the road from Coptos to the Red Sea coast and founded, or reconstructed, the port of Old Qosser, which he re-named Berenike, as its terminus, and another port Myos Hormos further north along the same coast. For the most part men preferred to travel up or down the Nile and to use the road to the coast rather than to face

the perils of the Red Sea, and thus at first Berenike became very popular, but later on a road was opened between Coptos and Myos Hormos and as this substituted a journey of seven days to the coast from the eleven required to reach Berenike, it gradually came about that Myos Hormos replaced Berenike. It is said that Ptolemy Philadelphus restored the road to the coast from Coptos for the use of his army and disposed regular resting places and reservoirs along its course to serve for those who travelled by foot or by camel.[1] In Strabo's time practically all the merchandise which came from India, Ethiopia, and Arabia was brought to Coptos "a town common to the Egyptians and Arabians"[2]; but some preferred to use the Red Sea and for them Ptolemy cleared out and restored the Royal Canal which connected the Pelusiac branch of the Nile with the port of Arsinoe, near the modern Suez. This canal had been commenced by Sesostris but afterwards abandoned and allowed to get choked up (cf. p. 32). Darius had made some efforts to restore it, but it had again fallen into disuse until it was revived by the Ptolemies.[3] Besides this Ptolemy Philadelphus founded colonies on the African coast and in Dioscorida (Soqotra), though that island remained subject to the king of the Incense Country.[4]

The trade of East Africa came up the coast and was landed at one of the three ports, Berenike, Myos Hormos, or Arsinoe: that of Arabia and India came across the sea from Leuke Kome (= al-Hawra ?) to one or other of the same ports. The Indian commerce across the sea was entirely in the hands of Arabs and the Ptolemies made no attempt to interfere with this, their efforts were directed only to improving the navigation of the Red Sea and to facilitating the transport from South-Western Arabia to Egypt. We hear of some adventurous and inquisitive Greeks who used the route across the Indian Ocean, which was now well known to the western world, and Strabo speaks as though some navigators did from time to

time sail from Egyptian ports to India,[5] but for the most part they were content to leave the traffic of the Indian Ocean to Arab or Indian mariners. It must, of course, be remembered that the Arabs of the south were, and still are, seafaring men, quite unlike their northern kinsmen.

In the Ptolemaic period the Red Sea was well explored and familiar to the Greek world. Some of our best early information about South Arabia is given by the botanist *Theophrastus* (d. 287 B.C.), a singularly careful and trustworthy observer, when he incidentally deals with the incense shrubs of Arabia.[6] A fuller account of the Red Sea, and, to some extent, of the South Arabian kingdoms was given by *Eratosthenes* (d. 196), the librarian of Alexandria and a diligent collector of information: he knew correctly the general shape of Arabia, the course of the inland trade routes connecting Hadramaut with Gerrha on the Persian Gulf and with Tehama on the Gulf of 'Aqaba: he seems to have obtained most of his information about India and Persia from a Syrian official named Patrokles who had served in the further east. Unfortunately this work is no longer extant, but it is partly known to us by the citations of Photius and Strabo.[7] Towards the end of the second century B.C. the grammarian *Agatharchides*, who was tutor to Ptolemy (Soter II, ?), wrote a description of the Red Sea in five books, and of two of these (I and V) we have extensive extracts in Photius and Diodorus Siculus.[8] Later again we have *Artemidorus* (circ. 100 B.C.), who was himself a traveller as well as geographer and was able to correct some of the statements of Eratosthenes. Strabo, Diodorus Siculus, and Pliny properly belong to the Roman period, but all three reproduce a good deal of the material of Eratosthenes, Agatharchides, and Artemidorus. Strabo himself visited Arabia in the expedition under Ælius Gallus and makes observations from his own experience: for the most part, however, he relies on Eratosthenes and Artemidorus for his account of Arabia and India for, as he complains, the

mariners and merchants who had visited those parts in his own days were too illiterate to make accurate observations or to describe correctly what they saw, but book 12 of his geographical work is not a mere revision of Eratosthenes as has been suggested. Diodorus Siculus uses the same authorities but in dealing with Egypt claims to have obtained information from the books of the Egyptian kings.[9] Pliny is no more than a diligent compiler but has preserved some items which do not appear in Strabo or Diodorus. These writers represent the knowledge of India, Arabia, and Central Asia accessible to the Greek world in the Ptolemaic age, and so far as its somewhat fragmentary material is still available it forms a valuable contribution to our authorities, without which we should have difficulty in piecing together earlier references to the South Arabian kingdoms and sifting the historical from the legendary in Arabic traditions about pre-Islamic Arabia.

(*f*) *The Red Sea under Roman Rule*

This commercial prosperity came to an end under the later decadent Ptolemies, and especially under the feeble rule of Cleopatra. The roads fell into decay, the canals were choked, and the coasts of Arabia became infested with wreckers, pirates, and barbarians who made slaves of shipwrecked strangers. But in 30 B.C. Egypt became a Roman province and under a firm and efficient administration began to recover its old commercial prosperity. It is interesting to note that the Indian king Pandion sent an embassy to Caesar in 20 B.C.[1] The envoys, encumbered with gifts, took four years to travel by the land route, whilst the whole journey might have been made in one year if they had gone by sea.[2]

Under the earlier emperors the Indian and Arabian trade was largely of a luxury character, mainly spices and incense from Arabia, and pepper, pearls, and beryls from South India. It became the fashion to burn many spices at the funerals of the

wealthy[3] and the use of cosmetics became popular. Pepper, beryls, and ginger are not mentioned before the time of Pliny, so their introduction to the west seems to belong to the revived sea trade of the Augustan age. These were all very costly luxuries, pepper being sold in Rome at 15 denarii to the pound.[4] Proof of this extensive trade appears in the finds of Roman coins, mostly of Augustus and Tiberius, in South-West India, at least 612 gold coins, and 1,187 silver.

Under Augustus the Egyptian canals were cleaned out, the roads repaired, and efforts made to revive the trade on the Red Sea. For some time armed guards were placed on ships navigating that sea, but in Pliny's time these were found to be no longer necessary.[5] Later on, Trajan cleaned out the Red Sea canal, cut a new course and placed a fleet in the Red Sea, all part of the bold forward policy of that emperor.[6]

Amongst the undertakings of Augustus was an expedition to Arabia which was entrusted to Ælius Gallus, the eparch of Egypt. This was intended to reduce Arabia to order and to check the pirates and wreckers along the coast, amongst whom the tribes south of Leuke Kome had a peculiarly evil reputation: but another, and perhaps the chief, motive was the hope of tapping the resources of South Arabia, which was popularly regarded as a kind of *el-dorado*.[7]

We have an account of this expedition from the pen of Strabo, who himself took part and this, as a very early narrative of exploration in Arabia described at first hand, is deserving of detailed examination. We read (Strabo, 16, 4, 22): "The expedition of the Romans to Arabia under Ælius Gallus which took place recently in our own times, has taught us many of the peculiarities of that country. Augustus Caesar sent him to explore those nations and places, as well as the boundaries of the Ethiopians and the land of the Troglodytes bordering on Egypt, and the neighbouring part of the Arabian Gulf which there is very narrow and separates the Arabs from the Troglo-

dytes, with the object of making treaty with, or reducing them. He heard that they had always been very wealthy, because they bartered spices for gold and silver and precious stones, and had no need of things imported from outside: he hoped to find amongst them wealthy friends, or else to conquer very rich foes. The friendly alliance with the Nabataeans urged him to great anticipations, as they promised to be a help in every way. Relying on them Gallus set out with his army. But Syllaeus, the commissary of the Nabataeans, deceived him, promising to show the way, to bring supplies, and to give every assistance, but he acted treacherously, not guiding them by an easy crossing, nor by a good road, but by trackless and circuitous places lacking in everything, or by toilsome ridges in the midst of hidden rocks and by shoals where the tide in its ebb and flow was most opposed to them. His first error was that he made long ships, though there was no naval warfare and none was to be expected, for the Arabs are not at all warlike either by land or sea, and are better fitted to be pedlars and traders. But he made some eighty biremes, as well as triremes, and small craft, at Cleopatris, which is near the old canal from the Nile. When he found out his mistake he made 130 merchant ships and embarked with 10,000 infantry of the Roman forces in Egypt and of the allied arms, amongst them 50 Jews, and 1,000 Nabataeans under Syllaeus. After many sufferings and in great distress he reached Leuke Kome in the land of the Nabataeans, an important port, but many of the ships were lost, some by the actual dangers of the crossing, not because there was any opposition to them. It was the malice of Syllaeus which caused that, because he denied that there was any road by which an army could be conveyed to Leuke Kome, though the caravan merchants who travel safely and comfortably with a vast body of men and camels from ridge to ridge do not differ from an army.[8] This happened because king Obodas did not want to share any enterprise, least of all a military

one—a common attitude of all the Arab kings—and everything concerning the route was entrusted to Syllaeus. He acted treacherously, intending, in my opinion, to reconnoitre the country, to march with the Romans to some cities and tribes, and then to establish himself as master when they were worn out by disease, hunger, toil, and other evils which he anticipated. So he reached Leuke Kome, and the army was sorely tried with scurvy of the gums and of the legs, diseases common to the country. There both those who had it in the mouth, and those who had it in the legs, had some relief because of the water and grass. He was compelled to stay there during the heat and colder weather whilst attention was given to the sick. (From Leuke Kome merchandise used to be carried to Petra, from Petra to Rhinoculora, which is in Phoenicia near Egypt, and thence to various parts, but now it comes down the Nile to Alexandria. Arabian and Indian goods are brought to Myos Hormos, then on camels to Coptos near Thebes, thence to Alexandria by the Nile.) Gallus again led out his army from Leuke Kome by parts such that water had to be carried on camels, and for this the malice of the guides was responsible. Then after many days he came to the land of Arata where was a kinsman of Obodas. He received Gallus in friendly fashion and gave him presents, but the treachery of Syllaeus made that country difficult also. So he wandered for thirty days through trackless parts where there was a defective supply of barley and dates and butter instead of oil. That was the land of the nomads and was mainly desert: it is called Ararene, its king is Sabus. Then he went on fifty days through trackless wastes as far as the city of the Agrani, a country peaceful and fertile. The king had fled and the city was captured at the first assault. The sixth day after he came to a river. There the barbarians were assembled for battle, about 10,000 of them fell, but only two of the Romans. They were altogether unwarlike and unskilled in their arms, which were arrows, lances, swords, and

slings, most of them with two-edged battle-axes. Soon afterwards he took a city called Aska, which was deserted by its king. Then he went to the city Athrulla, which he took without parley and placed there a garrison. Having raised supplies of corn and dates he proceeded to the city of Marsyabai, of the tribe of the Rhamanitai, who are under Ilasarus. For six days he invested it, but gave up for lack of water. He was only two days distant from the incense country, as he learned from captives. But he had spent six months on the way by the fault of the guides, though now he perceived their craft and, going back another way, in nine camps reached Anagnana, where a battle took place. Then in eleven days he reached the place called 'Seven Wells', thence by the desert to the village of Chaalla and so to another named Malotha beside a river, thence through a desert with very little water to the village Nera, which belongs to Obodas and is beside the sea. On the return he took sixty days, where he had previously wasted six months. Thence in eleven days he took his army across to Myos Hormos, and from there to Coptos. After that, with suitable resources, he reached Alexandria. He lost men, not by war, but by disease, toil, hunger, and the hardships of the road. In actual warfare only seven lost their lives. For these reasons the expedition did not achieve much as regards the knowledge of localities, but did have some result. The one to blame was Syllaeus, and for this reason he was punished in Rome by being beheaded as professing friendship but convicted of treachery and other evil deeds."

Roman opinion regarded this failure as due to the treachery of the Nabataean guide, but the fact was that the Roman army was quite unprepared for desert warfare, of which its leaders had no experience, and was extremely lucky in getting back with no more serious losses than was the case.

No doubt Negrana was Nejran, Hegra probably was el-Hejra, which, like el-'Ola, was a frontier station on the southern frontier

of Nabataea. Mariaba, which appears as *Μαρσναβα* in Strabo, and as Mariba in the *Mon. Ancyranum*, 22, probably denotes Maryab (מריב of *CIS.*, 19, 6; 28, 2; 37, 7, etc.), whose ruins remain in the district of Baihan al-Qasab, not Mariba of the dyke.

The hardships of the expedition were so great that the Romans made no further attempt to invade Arabia.[9] Although the expedition did not unlock a treasure house, as the Romans expected, it put wholesome fear into the hearts of the Arabs and this, with the efficient policing of the Red Sea, very soon produced good results, so that the trade round Arabia revived and increased beyond its proportions in Ptolemaic times.

(*g*) *Hippalus*

A most important development took place in A.D. 45 or thereabouts when the pilot Hippalus discovered the theory of the monsoons and found that the wind blew steadily for six months from east to west and then for six months in the opposite direction.[1] From this time onward a steady and regular trade by sea was developed between Egypt and India, and the Graeco-Roman world was brought into close touch with India, which lasted until about one century before the appearance of Islam. It was not Islam which cut the east and west asunder, but the decay of Byzantine navigation in the Red Sea which took place in the course of the sixth century, and which caused the Indian trade to revert to Arab mariners.

The *Periplus* or nautical directory of the Red Sea and Indian Ocean was compiled about the end of the first century A.D., when the discovery of Hippalus had brought this sea route into general use. It supplies our fullest and most accurate information about the coasts of the Red Sea and South Arabia, but naturally gives little information about the interior of the country.

At first the sea route meant a passage from Cape Syagrus

to Patala, but later, as mariners became more confident of the monsoons, they preferred to go to Sigerus on the Bombay coast, and later still the favourite route was from Kane or Cape Gardafui to Damirike (Malabar). The Arab route was from Okelis near Aden and then either past Soqotra to South India, or along the Arabian coast to Moscha, the port of the Incense Land, and across the ocean to Patala. At first, it will be observed, the tendency was to go as far north as possible in India, but afterwards, as navigators acquired more confidence and took fuller advantage of the monsoons, they were able to make quicker runs to places further south. Probably the record passage was made by the revenue ship of Annius Plocamus, which was carried across to Ceylon in fifteen days.[2]

Damirike, a name first used by Ptolemy (circ. A.D. 140), denotes Tamilikam or "Tamil land". In Ptolemy and the *Periplus* there is evidence of familiarity with the marts and ports of the Pandya country (Madura, Tinevelly), and the Chola country and Keraba (Malabar). At the same time we must remember that the Tamil states had navies and produced able and intrepid seamen, and it is quite possible that the older trade route east of Oman owed as much to Tamil mariners as to Arabs.

The Arabs greatly resented the opening up of a direct route from Egypt which tended to take the trade out of their hands, and about the time of the writing of the *Periplus* the Romans found it necessary to attack and chastise Eudaimon, whose citizens had tried to interfere with the trading ships.[3]

The Roman *aureus* circulated in South India and Roman bronze coins, partly imported and partly minted at Madura, were fairly common[4]; bronze vessels of Roman workmanship have been found about the same parts,[5] and there were colonies of Roman subjects in South India in the course of the first century A.D. In Oxyrhynchus Papyri III (1903) (No. 413), we find a farce, probably of the first to the second century A.D.,

which describes the adventures of some Greek travellers who had fallen into the hands of a barbarian king. The Greeks were quite unable to understand the speech of their captor and his attendants, but it has been suggested that the words given in the text are Canarese.[6]

Pliny deplores the vast sums sent every year to Arabia to pay for the produce of that country and of India and China,[7] and the *Periplus* tells us that a great deal of gold and silver plate as well as bronze was annually sent to Saba'.[8] More than one bronze figure of Hellenistic workmanship, or at least on lines suggested by Greek models, has been found in South Arabia, including a very spirited little head of a lynx preparing to spring, with a garland of vine leaves and ivy round its neck, now in the British Museum.[9] Occasionally Greek coins have been found in Arabia, amongst them an Athenian drachm which has been surcharged with a Himyaritic letter, and coins of native workmanship which show the figure of an owl and are evidently copied from Athenian models. Many were found by M. de Longperier in 1868 and by others since: the Greek coins are the earlier, the native copies of later date.[10] Marble heads have been found, one a female head with African features. Thus it is evident that, in the course of trade, Hellenistic influences had penetrated Arabia, which must then have been less isolated than it afterwards became under the rule of the Khalifs.

(*h*) *The Nabataeans*

The great rivals of the Ptolemies of Egypt were the Seleucids of Syria whose dominions at first stretched as far as the Panjab. But these very soon began to shrink, partly because the Seleucids had their whole attention fixed on the Ptolemies and so could spare none for the provinces in the east, and partly because the age of Alexander had been followed by a vigorous revival in India (cf. p. 70). As a result, about 255 the province of Bactria declared its independence and in 250 Arsaces established an

independent kingdom in Parthia. The revolt of Bactria was an instance of a Greek governor, no longer controlled by his suzerain, taking the opportunity to found a state of his own; but the Parthian revolt was a national movement and to some extent Parthia corresponded to the ancient Persia, though of more modest proportions. In the course of the second century B.C. the Parthians conquered Susiana and this was soon followed by the voluntary submission of Persia and Babylonia. This brought the Parthian border as far west as the Euphrates and the Seleucids were compelled to keep west of the Syrian desert where, in the days of Antiochus Epiphanes, the Jews rebelled under the leadership of the Maccabees.

Thus a border land came into existence between Parthia and Syria, largely desert, but with oases and several important trade routes intersecting its surface. Here the Arabs of the trade routes founded a kingdom of the Nabataei which had its capital at Petra. Nabataea is mentioned in the cylinder of Asurbanipal as an Arab confederacy[1] and is perhaps implied in the נביות of the Old Testament. This Arab kingdom was consolidated by Erotimus in the second century B.C.[2] The Syrian king Antigonus sent an expedition against it, but his general Athenaeus was defeated and had to make terms.[3] At its prime Nabataea extended from the Gulf of 'Aqaba to Damascus.

For some time after the Roman conquest of Syria and the absorption of Palestine Nabataea was suffered to remain as a kind of " buffer state " between the Roman Empire and Parthia. It was, perhaps, an unwise development of Trajan's policy which in A.D. 106 broke up this kingdom and replaced it by a Roman province of Arabia, but Trajan supposed that he could carry the imperial frontier well across the Euphrates, an idea which seemed justified by the weakness of Parthia at the moment.[4] The reign of Trajan shows the furthest advance of Rome eastwards, but the cost in money and human lives was

too heavy and at Hadrian's accession in 117 the provinces of Armenia, Mesopotamia, and Assyria were abandoned. No doubt this was necessitated by the pressure of public opinion which, though magnifying Trajan's victories, was now beginning to realize their terrible cost. At this period also the Arsacid kings of Parthia were beginning to feel the heavy burden of their wars with Rome and to experience the exhausting strain which finally led to their collapse. On both sides the civilized powers were beginning to draw back from the northern desert and the intervening area tended to revert to more primitive conditions. The crushing of the Nabataean kingdom had checked the possible development of a civilized state of Northern Arabs, and the old conditions of tribal life were resumed in the debatable territory between Rome and Parthia.

NOTES TO CHAPTER IV

(*a*) *Sea Route to India*

[1] Strabo, 16, 53.

[2] Cf. R. A. S. Macalister, *The Philistines*, 1913. W. Max Müller, *Asia und Europa* (esp. ch. xxvi–xxix, p. 362, Western type of armour, etc.).

[3] Rawlinson, i, 2, 35. and often elsewhere.

[4] Legrange, *Études sur les rélig. sémit.*, 2nd ed., ch. i ; and *Les sémites*, 41–69.

[5] Josephus, *c. Apionem*, i, 14–15. Cory, *Anc. Fragments*, new ed., 1876, 126.

[6] *Palestine Explor. Fund, Quarterly Statement*, 1904, 115 ; 1905, 28.

[7] *Bāberu Jātāka*, trs. Cowell and Rouse, Camb. 1907, iii, 83. For peacocks cf. Additional Note to Chapter III, pp. 56–7 above.

(*b*) *Land Route to India*

[1] *Camb. Hist. India.*, vol. i, ch. xx. Cf. Meyer in Kuhn, *Zeitschr.*, xlii ; and *JRAS.* (1909), 1094–1119.

[2] Coomaraswamy cited in Rawlinson, *Anc. Intercourse*, 8–9, and note 1 on p. 9.

[3] Behistun inscr. col. 1, sect. 6, in L. W. King and R. C. Thompson, *Sculpture and Inscr. of Darius the Great on the rock of Behistun*, Lond., 1907.

[4] Herodotus, 7, 68.

[5] Herdt., 3, 106.

[6] Rapson, *Grundriss d. Ind.-Ar. Philologie*, pl. i, 5 ; i, 6, 7.

(*c*) *Alexander*

[1] Arrian, *Anabasis*, vi, 19–20 ; *Indica*, 18–43.

[2] Arrian, *Indica*, 27.

(*d*) *Division of Alexander's Empire*

[1] Cited Clement of Alex., *Strom.*, 1, 15.

[2] For Asoka see F. W. Thomas in ch. xx, vol. i of *Cambridge Hist. of India*, and V. A. Smith, *Asoka*, 3rd ed., Oxford, 1920.

(*e*) *Ptolemies and the Red Sea*

[1] Plin., *NH.*, 6, 104, " A Copto camelis itur aquatione ratione mansionibus dispositis."

[2] Strabo, 17, 1, 44. *καὶ ἡ εἰς κοπτὸν διώρυξ πόλιν κοινὴν Αἰγυπτίων τε καὶ Ἀράβων.*

[3] Strabo, 17, 1, 25. " There is another (canal) which goes out into the Red Sea and Arabian Gulf at the city Arsinoe which some call Cleopatris and flows through the lakes called Bitter. Anciently these were bitter, but when the canal was made and the river mingled with them they were changed and now they have good fish and abound in waterfowl. The canal was first cut by Sesostris before the Trojan war, but some think that it was begun by Psammetichus just as death cut him off. Afterwards the first to continue the work was Darius, but he abandoned it when near completion for he was wrongly persuaded that the Red Sea has a higher level than Egypt and so, if the intervening land were cut through, Egypt would be flooded by the sea. The Ptolemies cut through, closing Euripus with a lock gate, so that when they wished they could sail out to sea and return again."

[4] *Periplus*, 31. The king would be the Sabaean or Himyaritic ruler.
[5] Strabo, 15, 1, 4. " Few of the merchants who now travel from Egypt by the Nile and the Arabian Gulf get to the Ganges and they are but illiterate persons (ἰδιῶται)."
[6] Theophrastus, *Hist. Plant.*, ix, 4.
[7] Eratosthenes, *Geography*, portions in Photius, *Codex*, 213, ed. Bekker, Berlin (2 vols.), 1824–5.
[8] Agatharchides, cf. Bekker ed. of Photius (above). Accessible also in C. Müller, *Geogr. Graeci Minores*, Paris, 1882, i, 111–95.
[9] Diodorus Sic., 3, 38, 46.

(*f*) *The Red Sea under Roman Rule*

[1] Strabo, 15, 4, 73. Cf. Merivale, *Romans under the Empire*, iv, 118, 175.
[2] Rawlinson, *Anc. Intercourse*, pp. 108–9.
[3] Pliny, *NH.*, 12, 18, 41 ; Juv. 4, 109 ; Stat. Sylv., 5, 208.
[4] Pliny, *NH.*, 12, 14.
[5] Pliny, *NH.*, 6, 101.
[6] Ptolemy, 4, 5. Eutropius, 8, 3.
[7] Plin., *NH.*, 6, 28, " Arabia gentium nulli postferenda." Cf. Horace, *Odes*, 1, 27 ; 2, 12 ; 3, 24 ; *Epist.*, 1, 6, 7. Strabo, " 16, 4, 19, he had heard that they had long been very rich by changing spices for gold and silver and precious stones" seems conclusive, bearing in mind Strabo's first-hand knowledge of the expedition.
[8] Plin., *NH.*, 6, 160–1, " Romana arma solus in eam terram adhuc intulit Ælius Gallus."
[9] Strabo, ib., 4, 22 (cf. 17, 1, 46. *κἀγὼ δὲ παρὼν ἐπὶ τῶν ὅπων μετὰ Γάλλου Αἰλίου . . .*].

(*g*) *Hippalus*

[1] Plin., *NH.*, 6, 100–1. *Periplus*, 57.
[2] Plin., *NH.*, 6, 22.
[3] *Periplus*, 26.
[4] Sewell, " Roman coins found in India," in *JRAS.*, 1903, 591.
[5] *Periplus*, 56. *Indian Antiq.*, 1905, 229.
[6] Cf. Dr. Hultzsch in *JRAS.*, 1904, 309, etc. L. D. Barnett in *JEA.* (1926), 13–15, shows weak points in this suggestion.
[7] Plin., *NH.*, 12, 34, " minumaque computatione milliens centena milia sestertium annis adimunt."
[8] *Periplus*, 24.
[9] Room II, No. 48311, " Bronze bolt with fore-part of lynx. Presd. by Captn. W. F. Prideaux (Aden)." Dug up at 'Amran.
[10] Hill, *Catalogue of Greek Coins of Arabia*, etc., 1922.

(*h*) *Nabataeans*

[1] Na-ba-ai-ti KB., ii, 216, 22.
[2] Josephus, *Antiq.*, 13, 3, 5 ; 15, 1, 2.
[3] Diod. Sic., 19, 94–100.
[4] Dio Cass., 68, 14. Amm. Marc., 14, 8. Enlarged by Septimus Severus in 195. Dio Cass., 75, 1, 2. Eutrop., 8, 18.

CHAPTER V

THE KINGDOMS OF SOUTH ARABIA

(*a*) *Saba'*

The earliest descriptive account we have of the kingdoms of South Arabia is that of the Greek geographer Eratosthenes (d. 196 B.C.) who is quoted by Strabo, and is supported by a passing reference of Theophrastus, the friend and pupil of Aristotle, who, however, is dealing with purely botanical topics and merely makes an incidental mention of the four kingdoms when speaking of the vegetable products of South Arabia. Eratosthenes says that there were four kingdoms in South Arabia and these belong to the Minaeans who dwell near the Red Sea, the Sabaeans, the Kattabanians who occupy the territory beside the straits and the passage across the Arabian Gulf, and the Chatramotitae who dwell to the east.[1] Theophrastus enumerates the three latter but gives Mamali or Mali instead of Minaeans.[2] Of these four Saba' and the Sabaeans were the best known, at least by name, as the term Sabaean was commonly applied to all Arabian merchants and is so used in the Old Testament (e.g. Job. i, 5; vi, 19; Jer. vi, 20, etc.). In giving the first three names Strabo obviously goes down from north to south, the Kattabanians who are in the south-west corner being mentioned last, and so we can place Saba' as between Minaea and Kattabania. It has been argued from Pliny, *Nat. Hist.*, 6, 32, that the Sabaeans are described as extending from shore to shore and so having part of the Red Sea coast and also part of the south coast curving round the whole of the land frontier of the Kattabanians: but the actual statement of Pliny is that these nations (i.e. the Thoani, Actaei, Chatramotitae,

Tonabei, Antidalei, Lexianae, Agraei, Cerbani, and Sabaei) extend from sea to sea and more probably implies that all those he enumerates spread across Arabia from the Persian Gulf on the east to the Red Sea on the west.

The earliest unquestionable reference to Saba' occurs in the annals of Tiglath-Pileser III (745–727 B.C.)[3] and the next in those of Sargon II (circ. 715), where the Sabaean It'iamar is mentioned as amongst those who brought tribute of gold and incense.[4] A much earlier inscription in Sumerian of Arad-nanna(r) who was patesi of Lagash about 2500 B.C. shows that he claimed to be ruler of *Sa-bu-um* and of the land of Gu-te-bu-um[5]; the former may perhaps refer to Saba' and if so, our information about the country is carried back to the third millennium. In later Akkadian inscriptions *Sa-ba-a-a-a* and *Sa-bu-um* frequently show references to Saba',[6] the סבא of the pre-Islamic Arabian inscriptions,[7] and the سبا of the later Arabic writers.

In the ordinary course Arabic and Abyssinian *s* corresponds with either *ś* or *sh* in Hebrew-Aramaic-Akkadian. It was not that the Arabs could not pronounce *sh*, for the Hebrew-Aramaic *ś* = *sh* in Arabic, Abyssinian, and Akkadian, and it seems that the change of *ś* to *sh*, and *sh* to *s* came comparatively late, supposing the *s-ś-sh* of Hebrew and Aramaic to represent the original sounds as appears to be the case,[8] and we sometimes find instances where the normal phonetic change does not occur. The explanation of such inconsistencies is, no doubt, that the change took place at one period and not at another. It is in accordance with normal phonetic relations that Saba' should appear as *Shaba* on Hebrew, and this accounts for Σαβὰ in the LXX, but the Masoretic text, showing a much later pronunciation, points it as שְׁבָא *Sh'ba* (Gen. x, 28; 1 Kings x, 1, etc.). In Akkadian this is *Sa-ba-a*, not *Sha-ba-a* as might be expected. But there is also *S'ba* (סְבָא), rendered Σαβά in the LXX, which fails to distinguish between *s* and *sh*

(Gen. x, 7; Job i, 15; Ps. lxxii, 10, and in the obscure passage Ezek. xxiii, 42, where the K'ri reads מִמְּבָאִים "people of S^{e}ba from the wilderness"). Josephus explained this סבא as the ancient name of the island and city of Meroe in Nubia.[9] So it appears that there were two different places called Saba', the one in Arabia, the other in Africa, the latter being a colony from the Arabian Saba', as Ludolf long ago pointed out.[10] In Hebrew and Aramaic the distinction is made that the Arabian one is called שבא, the African one סבא, and the two are distinguished in Ps. lxxi, 10. "The kings of Sheba and Saba shall bring gifts to him." In Isaiah Seba is twice grouped with Ethiopia (Isa. xliii, 3; xlv, 14). Greek, as we have seen in the LXX, is obliged to give Σαβά for both, and so Strabo, who cites a long extract from Artemidorus (Strabo, 16, 4, 5–17) describing East Africa, in which Σαβαί (sect. 10) is included and the Sabaean Berenike near the elephant hunting ground, which obviously refers to African conditions, not to Arabian ones. Similarly Ptolemy (4, 7, 8) mentions Σαβάτ on the west side of the Red Sea. Distinct from both these are the Sabis river which Pomponius Mela mentions as in Carmania on the eastern side of the Persian Gulf (Mela 3, 18, 4), and the Sabo mountains at the entrance of the Persian Gulf, mentioned by Ptolemy (6, 7, 23) and in the *Periplus* ascribed to Arrian.

We have another source of information in the inscriptions found in the land of Saba' and adjacent territory, of which no less than 686 were discovered by J. Halévy, and very many more since by Glaser and other explorers. A great deal of Glaser's material remains still unpublished (in the hands of N. Rhodokanakis), its value perhaps a little obscured by the controversies raised by certain of the theories which he propounded (see below, p. 94), but the material itself of such importance that it is the ultimate basis and the test of all our knowledge of ancient Arabia. Part IV of the Paris *Corpus*

Inscriptionum Semiticarum aims at a collection of these inscriptions: volume i has been published in four parts (1889, 1892, 1900, 1908), vol. ii as yet only two fasciculi (1911, 1914), vol. iii is to contain the Minaean and Qatabanian inscriptions. A very handy index of the proper names in the first five fasciculi has been prepared by W. T. Pilter.[11] From these inscriptions we obtain a certain knowledge of the Sabaean language, the deities worshipped in Saba', and general indications of a fairly advanced culture, as well as many historical and geographical details, though the whole field is one in which much work remains yet to be done. The language, closely akin to Abyssinian and in many respects to Akkadian, is best studied in F. Hommel, *Süd-Arabische Chrestomathie*, Munich, 1893. The inscriptions are written in characters derived from the Phoenician script, and as that script seems to have taken form about 1000 B.C. it would probably be safe to suggest circ. 700 as the most likely date for the earliest Sabaean inscription: that means that the use of the Phoenician alphabet in Arabia begins about the time of the Assyrian conquests there, and if, as seems probable, those conquests resulted in thrusting back the Arab tribes, and, perhaps, pushing some of them down into South Arabia, it is just possible that Assyrian aggression may have been responsible for the spread of culture down into Arabia.

Other evidence of Sabaean culture exists in the remains of engineering works of which the greatest is the dam ('arim) near Marib. This dam figures prominently in Arabic tradition and is mentioned in Qur'an 34, 15: its actual remains exist a few miles south of Marib and were visited and described by Arnaud.[12] These engineering works have been ascribed to Egyptian and Babylonian influence, certainly they show a character akin to the constructions made by people of the "river valley" culture for the artificial control of water liable to periodical inundation. The dam was destroyed by flood about A.D. 447–50 and partially restored by the Abyssinian

viceroy Abraha who has left an inscription recording his work,[13] but was destroyed again at a later date. The destruction of the dam is a perfectly historical event, though it has been obscured by a mass of legendary traditions. The Qur'an, referring to Saba' and its people, says " so they turned aside and we sent on them the flood of 'Arim " (Qur. 34, 15). Here the disaster is described as a judgment sent upon the people of Saba', and the commentators exercise their ingenuity in speculating on how the destruction took place, and what were the sins for which the people were punished. Beiḍawi tells us that *'arim* means " a disastrous or violent rain ", or " a rat ", or else that it is the plural of *'arimat* and means " piled up stones " (i.e. a dam). On these grounds it has been conjectured that the flood took place as the result of a violent rain, or else that a rat bored through the dam and brought about its collapse. These are simply speculations based upon secondary meanings of the word which properly denotes a dam and so is akin to the Hebrew עֹרֶם used for " piling up (water) " in Exod. xv, 8. As to the sin which brought about the collapse, Maṣ'ûdî (*Murûj*, iii, 365–70) gives several fantastic legends. Obviously the Arabic writers had no sources available which are not now accessible to us: they had the Qur'an text which is before us and could do no more than make conjectures about its meaning, no real traditions of pre-Islamic Arabia survived in the days of the Arabic historians, or else they had been expurgated and modified so as to be brought into conformity with the Qur'an.[14]

Strabo, on the authority of Eratosthenes, says that the metropolis of the Sabaeans was called Mariaba, and also cites a description from Artemidorus which says that " the city of the Sabaeans, Mariaba, stands on a mountain full of trees . . . some of the people cultivate the fields, others traffic in spices either produced at home or brought from Ethiopia, sailing thither across the straits in boats made of bark" (Strabo, 16, 4, 19). Diodorus Siculus citing Agatharchides (Diod. Sic., 3, 46)

describes Sabai as situated on a lofty wooded hill within two days' journey from the incense country. As with several of these South Arabian names, the Greek geographers, compelled to rely upon hearsay, seem uncertain whether a city or country is denoted, and Pliny seems inclined to suppose that Mariaba was a general name for every capital city, a theory not supported by the inscriptions. Diodorus calls the city Sabai, and Strabo calls it Mariaba: Abu l-Fida says that the city was called Ma'rib or Saba', but that some people thought that Ma'rib was the proper name of the royal residence, Saba' of the city generally.[15] Ptolemy (6, 7, 38; 42) mentions Saba' as a city in the interior of the Sabaean country, and this seems supported by Pliny (*NH.*, vi, 23, 34). The name Marib appears in the inscriptions as מרב, and there is also a מריב,[16] which may be another form of the same name but more probably indicates Maryaba (Maryama) south-east of Marib, a city whose ruins still exist in Baiḥan el-Qasab in the Wadi Baiḥan. Apparently there were two or more places bearing the same name or very similar names. Pliny (*NH.*, 6, 28) makes it clear that there was a Mariaba Baramalchum which was a city of the Charmaei, a branch of the Minaei, and another Mariaba which belonged to the Calingii (Calingii quorum Mariaba oppidum, Plin., *NH.*, 6, 28); when he says that "Gallus oppida diruit . . . et supradictam Mariabam, circuitu VI mill. passuum: item Caripeta quo longissime processit" (ib.) he presumably refers to the *Μαρσύαβα* in the land of the Rhamanitae which Strabo mentions (16, 4, 24) as the furthest point reached by Gallus. There, says Strabo, the ruling king was *Ἰλίσαρος*, perhaps the אלשרת of *CIS.*, 69, 4, 135; 140, etc. Dio Cassius says that the extreme point reached was Athlula,[17] so it is quite clear that no one of these accounts can be taken as giving the details with complete accuracy in all respects. It is probable that the Mariaba Baramalchum mentioned by Pliny was the Sabaean capital if Baramalchum stands for "Baḥr malch-um"

or " royal lake " and refers to the waters held back by the great dyke ('arim) near at hand.

A recent description of the city and neighbouring country tells us that, " Stretching away some 160 miles NNE. of Yemen, and separated from the plateau of San'a by the arid downs of Nehm and Beled Khaulan, is an extensive hollow—or, more precisely, a broken chain of hollows. This great irregular depression runs north and south, falling away from the table-land of Yemen and Asir, and having on the east the high sands of the great eastern desert. The southern part of the depression is Jauf (known more particularly as Jauf el-Yemen), the old centre of Sabaean civilization." [18] The ancient capital Marib is now known as Mareb (30 miles south of Lower Jauf and 55 miles east-north-east of San'a), it was visited by Niebuhr in 1762 and later by Halévy, who describes it as in ruins save that portion which, situated on a hill, forms the modern town. The ruins cover an area of about 500 metres in diameter and contain many marble pillars without capitals. The site of the dam is about 2 to 3 hours' journey to the west, at the entrance of a valley which forms the bed of the Wadi Shibwan. " The part still existing shows the remains of a dyke, of very solid construction, with several sluices. A little to the south-west are to be seen the ruins of a large building of hewn stone, admirably constructed, against a gigantic rock." [19] Near by is still a chain of deep spring-fed reservoirs.[20] There are other ancient cities near, of which the most important is Nejran in a district " separated from the Upper Jauf by a four days' journey across difficult country ".[21]

Under Himyaritic rule the capital was removed from Marib to San'a (צנען *CIS.*, 314, 15, etc.), and this change is traditionally associated with the bursting of the dyke of 'Arim.

Some writers have supposed that Saba' is a collective noun meaning " travellers " and so " merchants " (cf. سباء " long journey "), but this is dubious, whilst the suggestion of

the *Taj el-'Arûs* (cited in Lane's *Lexicon*, *sub voce*) that the word means "scattered" because the people were dispersed at the bursting of the dyke of 'Arim is of course absurd, as that bursting did not take place until the sixth century A.D. The real derivation of the name in unknown. Hamza al-Isfahani says that Saba' means "captives" and that it refers to the vast number of prisoners brought home from Egypt by one of the Sabaean kings and settled there, a conjecture of no great value.[22]

It is possible that the kingdom of Saba' was founded by North Arabs who moved south, perhaps at the time of the Assyrian conquest (circ. eighth century B.C.) and that those migrants are the *Aribi* of the Akkadian inscriptions[23] whose earlier home was at Jôf (Jawf), perhaps the Jârêb of Hos, 5, 13; 10, 6, in the land of Midian, not in any way connected with the Jôf in Yemen.

(*b*) *Minaea*

Amongst the kingdoms of South Arabia Eratosthenes (in Strabo, 16, 4, 2) mentions that of the Meinaioi who had their capital at Karna. In that description Minaea was in the north, Saba' lay to its south, Qataban still further south, and Hadramaut lay to their east. Theophrastus, who agrees with Eratosthenes as to the other three kingdoms, calls this after the Mamali, perhaps a transcriptional error for Minaioi.[1] Pliny refers to the Minaei as bordering on the Atramitae (people of Hadramaut) in the interior.[2] The inscriptions of Beled Hamdan (חמדן) north of Saba' prove that there was an independent Minaean state (= Ma'in) whose deities differed from those mentioned in the Sabaean inscriptions, and whose language also shows points of difference, e.g. in the Minaean use of סו, ם, in the 3rd sing. personal pronoun where Sabaean has הו, ה, and in the use of ם as formative of the causative of the verb where Sabaean has ה. E. Glaser, whose explorations and discoveries

(not yet completely published), including some 2,000 inscriptions, are the principal basis of our present knowledge of pre-Islamic Arabia, brought forward the theory that Minaean represents an earlier history and culture which was afterwards supplanted by that of the Sabaeans, a theory which has found its supporters in Hommel, Winckler, Barton, etc., but has been opposed by Halévy, Sprenger, Mordtmann, Meyer, Lidzbarski and others.[3] The controversy, still under debate, shows very serious difficulties in Glaser's theories. Eratosthenes (in Strabo, 16, 4, 2) and Agatharchides (in Pliny, *NH.*, 12, 30, 14) speak of Saba' and Minaea as rivals, which Glaser's followers explain by supposing that they overlapped, the Sabaeans coming forward as competitors before they overcame and supplanted the Minaeans. Glaser suggests that the Minaeans had sunk back into barbarism or were actually extinct towards the end of the first century B.C., but this is not consistent with Pliny's reference to them as the neighbours of the Sabaeans and Ptolemy's description of them at a still later date as a "very great people".[4] Diodorus refers to the Minaeans as those who brought incense from upper, i.e. inner, Arabia (Diod. Sic., 3, 42), and this agrees with the Cairo sarcophagus in making them share this incense trade with the Sabaeans at a comparatively late period, for that sarcophagus, of the Ptolemaic period, proves that they were then supplying incense for the Egyptian temples.[5] The inscriptions from Saba', which are very numerous, and of which the British Museum has a good collection, do not show evidence of being later in their epigraphy or in grammar than those of the Minaeans, though this must be taken with caution, for the variation between Minaean *s* and Sabaean *h* might indicate older or later forms, though difference of local dialect seems the more probable explanation. It is clear that the two languages and the two communities were distinct, but whether they were contemporary or not remains an open question, though it is not possible to accept the view that the difference in time between

them was very great, still less that either had passed away or reverted to barbarism in Ptolemaic or Roman times. As we have already noted, the use of a script derived from the Phoenician renders it improbable that any of the Minaean or Sabaean inscriptions could be much earlier than the eighth century B.C., which would hardly suffice for the very remote antiquity claimed for the Minaean inscriptions in Glaser's theory, where it is supposed that the Sabaean kingdom rose about 750 B.C. and that the Minaean culture was then in its decline and had begun about 1250 B.C. At Harim, also, relics both of Minaean and of Sabaean religious cults have been found,[6] though no great stress can be laid on this as they need not, of course, have been contemporary.

In Jof we find a place named Ma'in: "Jauf contains, according to Halévy's experience, more ancient ruins than any other district of Arabia. Among these the most important from an historical point of view are those which bear to-day the names of Ma'in and Mareb. The former undoubtedly represents the capital of the Minaeans."[7] Eratosthenes calls their capital Karna (Karana), no doubt the Qarnawu of the inscriptions,[8] and this seems identical with the modern Ma'in which was visited by Halévy in 1869–70.

The LXX uses *Μεινᾶοι* (*Μιναιοι* A.) to transliterate the *Me'ûnîm* (הַמְּעוֹנִים) of 1 Chron. iv, 41; 2 Chron. xxvi, 7, etc., the plural of מְעוֹן (cf. Judges x, 12) which was probably Ma'ân about 18 miles east-south-east of Petra, where the LXX (BAL.) reads "Midian". Both here and in Saba' (cf. this page, above) we seem to have hints either that the Minaeans and Sabaeans moved south, or else that their colonies and trading posts at one time extended as far north as Midian and were gradually pushed back, perhaps by the course of Assyrian conquest. No Sabaean or Minaean inscriptions can be placed earlier than about 700 B.C. and the culture represented by those inscriptions is undoubtedly derived from the north.

(c) *Qatabân*

Theophrastus refers to one of the four kingdoms in South Arabia as Kittibaina or Kattabaina,[1] which agrees with the kingdom of the Kastabaneis mentioned by Strabo,[2] with the Catabanes or Catabani of Pliny,[3] and the Qatabân of the inscriptions.[4] Strabo describes this kingdom as occupying the extreme south-west corner of Arabia by the narrow strait which forms the entrance to the Arabian Sea (Bâb el-Mandeb). On its southern coast was the port of Aden [5] which was destroyed about the time of Gallus' expedition and temporarily replaced by Muza on the Red Sea, but restored in Himyaritic times. Glaser has 100 inscriptions from Aden and its vicinity which can be classed as distinctively Qatabanian, and from these we find that the language of Qatabân was more closely akin to Minaean than to Sabaean, having *s* in the causative of the verb and in the 3rd personal pronoun, not *h*, whilst from the inscr. Halévy 504 we learn that Ma'in (Minaea) became dependent on Qatabân, and in the Sabaean inscriptions Glaser 418–19 we find Ma'in and Qatabân classed together as enemies conquered by Saba'. All this agrees in showing Minaea and Qatabân closely united. From these inscriptions Glaser gets the names of eighteen rulers, of whom the earlier were *makârib* or "priest kings".[6] Qatabân also shows distinctive peculiarities in its religion and one deity, Haukum (whose name is perhaps connected with the Arabic $\sqrt{hwk}$ = "cause plants to spring up (rain)" or "weave"), is not found elsewhere. Hommel (*Grundriss der Geogr.*, etc., 139, 142) supposes that Qatabân came to an end in the second century B.C., but Catabanes are mentioned by Pliny (*NH.*, 5, 56) where he is using the authority of Juba II of the first century B.C., and Catabani in a later passage (ib., 6, 32), where he professes to derive his information from the reports brought home by those who took part in Gallus' expedition. It is not mentioned in the *Periplus*, although that work deals especially with the coasts and their inhabitants,

but its people are mentioned as Kottabanoi by Ptolemy (*Geogr.*, 6, 7, 24). The inscr. Halévy 504, on the other hand, implies a Qatabanian conquest of Minaea, though apparently both Qatabân and Minaea were afterwards absorbed by Saba' (cf. Glaser, 418–19, cited above). Strabo says: "Kattabania produces incense and myrrh, as does also Chatramotitis." [7]

The actual country called Qatabân is that to which the Arabic writers usually give the name of Yemen, using Qaḥṭân as a collective name for the Yemenites, because, as Maṣ'udi states,[8] they regarded Qaḥṭân as another form of the name Yoqṭân of Gen. x, 26 (cf. p. 17 above). D. B. Müller (*Die Burgen*, etc., ii) suggests that Qatabân is a corruption of Beni Qaḥṭân, and elsewhere (ib., i, 83) makes the still stranger suggestion that it denotes "scribes" (√*ktb*). Perhaps this use of the name Qaḥṭân is in some way connected with the town bearing that same name which stood between Zabid and Ṣana'a and is mentioned by al-Muqaddasi.[9]

Strabo, on the authority of Eratosthenes, says that the chief city of the Kattabaneis was Tamna,[10] which may (or may not) be the Thomna of Pliny and the Thouma of Ptolemy.[11] Pliny says that "incense can only be exported through the country of the Gebanitae . . . Thomna, which is their chief city, is 4,436 miles distant from Gaza, a city of Judaea on the shores of our sea, the distance being apportioned into 65 days' journey by camel".[12] Elsewhere, reporting information brought home by those who had taken part in Gallus' expedition, he says that other places and nations lying to the south are "the Ansaritae, the nations of the Larendani, the Catabani, and the Gebanitae who occupy many towns, of which the greatest are Nagia and Thomna, which has 65 temples." [13] These Gebanitae are mentioned by Strabo (16, 4, 4) as the carriers who took the incense of Kattabania and Chatramotitis to Elanai (Aila, 'Aqaba) at the head of the Red Sea. Glaser (*Punt*, 35, 60) suggests that they were a subdivision of the Qatabân; or it

may be that they were a tribe which had risen to importance and made itself independent shortly before the beginning of the Christian era. The inscriptions mention a city named תמנע (Tamna', or Timna') which, as Glaser (*Abessinier*, 112, 115) suggests, may be the Tamna' in the Wâdi Baiḥân el-Qaṣâb.[14] Former editors of Strabo, not recognizing the name "Gabaioi" corrected it to "Gazaioi" (Casaubon), or "Gerrhaioi" (Tzschucke), but this is not required.

After Ptolemy we get no independent reference to Qatabân or the Gabaioi (Gebanitae), presumably because they were merged in Saba', then with Saba' in the kingdom of the Himyarites. Later Greek writers refer to all the people of South Arabia as Homeritae (Ḥimyarites), and the Arabic writers use only such names as Ḥimyar, Qaḥṭân, and Yemen. Yemen means no more than "right hand" or "south" and occurs as a purely geographical term for the ancient Qatabân and Saba'.

No doubt the city of Tamna, which at the time of Gallus' expedition was reported to have had 65 temples, ceased to be of great importance after Qatabân was conquered by Saba', but later on the Sabaean capital Marib was replaced by Sana'a which is in the territory which once was Qatabân, and this still remains the chief city of Yemen. Its name perhaps occurs as צנעו in the Himyaritic inscription, Glaser 424, but the city does not figure prominently until the revolt against the Abyssinian governor Abraha in A.D. 530. In later times its importance rests on the fact that it was the southern terminus of the road running north and south through the Hijâz, and so it is the heir of Tamna with which, however, it has no other connexion.

(*d*) *Hadramaut*

Eratosthenes refers to the Chatramotitae (*Χατραμωτῖται*) who had their capital at Kabatanon (*Καβάτανον*), (Strabo, 16, 4, 2) and Theophrastus (*Hist. Plant.*, 9, 4) speaks of the land

of Hadramyta, whilst Pliny refers to the "Atramitae, a community of the Sabaeans" (Plin., *NH.*, 6, 28, 32). Under these names we recognize the land and people of Hadramaut (حضرموت *CIS.*, 126, 15; 155, 3, etc.).[1] This name was originally a plural Hadramât. As the Comte de Landberg observes: "j'ai déjà relevé que l'â se prononce dans certaines contrées du sud ô et û et que c'est ainsi que s'explique le nom de Ḥaḍramât, Ḥaḍramôt, Ḥaḍramût, etc., aussi Ḥaḍramaut."[2] Thus we have a suggested singular Hadram-, and Leo Hirsch is of opinion that the *-m-* in this is a relic of mimation, giving stem Ḥaḍra-.[3] A false etymology has made this name mean "the valley of death", and a legend has arisen that the over-powering fragrance of the incense shrubs spread death. A very early traveller's tale describes the whole country as scented with the spices, and this appears in Herodotus (3, 113). Strabo, citing Artemidorus, says: "amongst them myrrh, and frankincense, and cinnamon is produced, and on the sea-coast also balsam and other fragrant plants, though their perfume very soon passes away. There are also scented palms and reeds. But there are serpents a span long, red in colour, which spring up as high as the thigh, and their bite is incurable" (Strabo, 16, 4, 19). This seems to be another form of the "death legend". Diodorus Siculus emphasizes the abundance of the spices and their fragrance which fills the air, and implies that even the earth exudes a sweet fragrance when it is dug. Just before this he had mentioned that the balsam grows there and nowhere else in the world, and before that again he had spoken of a lake full of bitumen near which the ground had many fires and gave forth foul smells, "this renders men's bodies liable to disease and only allows a brief span of life" (Diod. Sic., 2, 48–9). He does not say that this evil effect is connected with the incense shrubs, but ascribes it to the odours of the bitumen district, and then goes on to describe the incense land. These stories,

loosely treated, seem to have produced the legend of the death-dealing character of the incense country and that, so far as Arabic writers are concerned, was helped by the mistaken meaning deduced from the name. In fact it is a singularly healthy district with a dry clear climate, and at the present time is productive in cereals, durra, dates, tobacco, figs, grapes, indigo, etc. The inhabitants are industrious and successful cultivators, but the development of the country is checked by lack of capital. Many of the men go abroad and, when they have earned enough, return to their native land. The Bedwin live in mud huts or in caves, there are no tent dwellers in Hadramaut. The local dialect has many peculiar and interesting features which have sometimes been taken to be survivals of " South Arabic ", i.e. Minaean and Sabaean, but seem to be rather archaic forms of North Arabic. In the coast strip known as Mahra, however, dialectal peculiarities are very marked and do show striking similiarities with the ancient South Arabic, and there, perhaps, as in the island of Soqotra, there actually are survivals. The older inhabitants were known as Ṣadaf or Ṣadif, but about the time of the birth of the Prophet they were joined by the Kinda from the Baḥrayn. This is no more than a tradition, but it seems to contain an element of truth in so far as it assumes a migration of Arabs from the north, with the result that Ḥaḍramaut was drawn into the general life of the North Arabs but belonged to the southern faction in the political disputes of early Muslim history.

The older name of this country was Raidan.[4] In the first century B.C. (?) it was annexed by Saba'[5] and there followed a succession of twenty-six kings who claimed to be " kings of Saba' and masters of Raidan ".[6] Then both Saba' and Raidan were absorbed in the Himyarite kingdom,[7] and later still were conquered by the Abyssinians.[8]

Strabo (16, 4, 2) says that the capital was Kabatanon (Sabatanon). Pliny (*NH.*, 6, 28, 32) calls it Sabotha,[9] obviously

the Sabbatha of the *Periplus* (sect. 15) and Ptolemy (6, 7, 38), the Sabwah of the Qamus, now Shabwah about 55 miles north-east of Nisab, where the modern town is built on the ruins of the ancient city. This is in the extreme west of Hadramaut. The *Periplus* speaks of it as on the banks of a navigable river.

The incense trade is associated with Saba' and Minaea, but the actual production of the spices was chiefly about Zofar or Dhofar or Safar (ظفار), the S^{e}phôr of the Old Testament (Gen. x, 30) in the east of Hadramaut, now included within the political sphere of Oman. To-day the incense shrub or *leban* grows in this area, though now regarded as much inferior to the produce of India and Siam: the best quality is known as *leban lekt*, the second as *leban resimi*, and the average export to Bombay alone, whither it is carried in native boats, is reckoned at 9,000 cwt. The shrub grows best at Hoye and Haski, about four days' journey from Merbat, on the slopes leading down to the great central desert.

Strabo and Pliny refer to this trade as being in the hands of Gabanitae (Gabaean) merchants, but these were properly a tribe of the Qatabanians and the carriers, not the producers, of the incense. Thus Pliny (*NH.*, 12, 32), " the incense can only be exported through the country of the Gabanitae . . . Thomna, which is their chief city, is 4,436 miles distant from Gaza, a city of Judaea, on the shore of our sea, the distance being divided into 65 days' journey by camel." So Pliny, dealing with information derived from Gallus' expedition, speaks (*NH.*, 6, 32) of other places and nations which lie to the south and include " the nations of the Larendani, the Catabani, and the Gabanitae who occupy very many towns of which the largest are Nagia and Thomna, which has 65 temples."

(e) *The Himyarites*

Our earliest reference to the Himyarites or Homeritae occurs in Pliny [1] who speaks of them as between Saba' and the sea

and so occupying the land which Strabo called Kattabaina. In the inscriptions they appear as חמירם.[2] In later times they are frequently mentioned, usually as *Homeritae*, sometimes as *Immirenoi* or *Immeres* (Theodore Anagnostes, *Hist. Eccl.*, 2, 58). In the inscriptions the title " king of Saba' and Himyar " replaces that of " king of Saba' and master of Raidan ", and it seems that Himyar was a comparatively late arrival in the political life of Arabia, at first replacing the earlier Qatabân, then absorbing Saba' and Raidan, until finally about A.D. 350 all these, Saba', Raidan, and Himyar, come under the king of Axum, although Axumite rule was not effective beyond the Tehama or shore country. Before the Axumite invasion, therefore, all the kingdoms of the south-west were united under the Himyarites and thus later writers, both Greek and Arab, use " Himyarites " as a general name for all the people of South Arabia, or else it is used for all who did not actually belong to Yemen, so that the people of the south are called " Yemenites and Himayrites ". Saba' disappears as a place name from the Greek and Latin writers about the end of the fourteenth century A.D. and after this Himyarites or Homeritae denote all South Arabians.

Pliny speaks of their capital as Sapphar (Plin., *NH.*, 6, 104), and Ptolemy (6, 6, 25) calls that town the metropolis of the Sappharitae. No doubt the town in question was Zofar, the Old Testament S^{e}phar, though it seems that there were several towns bearing this name and the Himyaritic capital is more properly *Zofar es-Sahib*, the same which had previously ranked as capital of Hadramaut, so it is just possible that the rise of the Himyarites may indicate a revolt of the eastern Arabs against the rule of the western Sabaeans. The *Periplus* (23) refers to Charibael as the " ruler of the Homeritae and the Sabaeans " who lived at Taphar (Zofar).[3]

(f) Land Routes through Arabia

In dealing with the land routes used by caravans our evidence is primarily concerned with the routes now known to be in use, but in so far as these are dependent upon the position of the deserts and mountains and on the water supply, no doubt they in the main indicated the general directions of the chief ancient routes. We start from Zofar on the south coast, opposite Soqotra, as this was the metropolis of the incense traffic on which the greater part of Arabian trade depended. To the north lies the great desert known as Ruba' el-Khali and the ordinary routes pass to east and west so as to avoid crossing the desert, though there is a tradition of a direct route from Baghdad to Zofar which was in use in the Middle Ages and, if this is to be taken literally, it would have crossed the desert [1]: it is generally believed, however, that the desert is impassable and it may be that the tradition refers to caravans which skirted round the east side, via Oman, and so made a continuous journey from Baghdad to Zofar, in some part of which they ventured on a short cut across a portion of the desert. The western route goes along the main Wadi of Ḥaḍramaut, an easy and pleasant road, to Shabwa in the extreme west of Ḥaḍramaut where a branch road leading to Aden met it, and then proceeded to Marib, the capital of Saba', thence to San'a, where again a branch road connected with Aden. As Pliny tells us that Tamna was the terminus of the merchants trading with Gaza it is probable that goods changed hands there, and when San'a replaced Tamna that presumably became the mart.

From Ṣan'a the road went almost due north through the Hijâz, passing between the two parallel ridges of mountains (cf. 8), passing through Hediyah to el-'Ola, the frontier station of Nabataean territory, and there the Yemenite Arabs handed over their goods to the Nabataean Arabs who took them to Teima. At Teima the merchandise was divided, some went north to Bosra, Palmyra, or Damascus, and so reached Syria,

some was carried through Aila [2] ('Aqaba), Rhinoculora (el-'Arish), and the northern end of the Sinaitic peninsula, to Egypt, whilst other, again passed via Ha'il to Babylon in a broad curve planned to avoid the difficult Nefûd. Thus, apparently, the northern routes ran in Nabataean days: at an earlier period the Hijâzi route seems to have run right up to Teima, and the Yemenites carried their merchandise thither. No doubt the stoppage and transfer on the frontier were parts of the method introduced by the Nabataeans to secure a due proportion of the carrying trade for themselves. About the beginning of the Christian era, apparently the Yemenites often went the whole way up to Aila. Later, when goods changed hands at el-'Ola, or at any rate came under Nabataean supervision, the caravans were joined there by clerks and customs officials who went with them across Sinai where, as the Arabs pastured their camels, they had a great deal of leisure. To these idle clerks and officials, presumably, are due the many *graffiti* which are found in various parts of Sinai, especially in the Wadi Mukatteb. Many of these inscriptions are in valleys which lead nowhere but to pasture lands and can only be explained by the presence of clerks and officials suffering enforced idleness whilst the Arabs were feeding their camels. Cosmas Indicopleustes, in the sixth century A.D., saw these inscriptions and supposed that they were relics of the Israelites going out of Egypt in the days of Moses [3]: at that time conditions had changed entirely, the Nabataean kingdom had long disappeared, and the traffic was in the hands of Hijâzi Arabs who went the whole way up to Syria, Egypt, and Mesopotamia. Under the Romans Aila was made the station of the Xth Legion [4] and dues were collected there by the imperial officials. From Aila Trajan constructed a road which led up into Palestine and Syria, and thence also a road passed to Gaza and so served the Mediterranean trade. In Ptolemaic days the port of Leuke Kome connected with San'a and Marib, merchandise taken to that port being conveyed across the Red Sea to

Berenike or Myos Hormos. The first rise into importance of Aila was due to its being a port for Red Sea shipping, not primarily as a mart for the land route from the Hijâz. Later, when the Red Sea shipping declined, the Hijâzi route revived and then Mecca and Yathrib (Medina) began to rise into importance. Yathrib was a colony of Jewish agriculturists and artisans, whilst Mecca was important as connecting with a cross road which went round the north side of the Ruba' al-Khali by way of ar-Riad to Gerrha on the Persian Gulf.

Returning to Zofar, we find another road which passed to the east, skirted round Oman, and then went up to Gerrha (el-Qatif), thus avoiding the dreaded central desert. By this road, no doubt, Indian merchandise landed at Gerrha, came round through Zofar to San'a and so to Leuke Kome on the Red Sea or else up the Hijâz. There may have been direct communication between India and the coast of Hadramaut, a passage which native boats now do without difficulty, but undoubtedly the greater part of the Indian trade went up the Persian Gulf. On the south coast there were, at least in Ptolemaic times, the ports of Aden and Kane, both connected by road with Shabwa, the former also directly with San'a.[5]

Thus we have, as might be expected, a continuous series of routes all round the great southern desert, Gerrha-Zofar-Shabwa-Marib-San'a-Mecca-er-Riad-Gerrha, but of these possibly the road across the northern side (Mecca-er-Riad-Gerrha) was of later date. No doubt the road from Gerrha via er-Riad-'Aneyzah-Ha'il to Teima is a very ancient one, as Teima in its best days was the great distributing centre for all Arabia, an important function which goes back to Egyptian and Assyrian times, but the connecting road between er-Riad and Mecca seems to belong to the period of the revival of the Hijâz route when Red Sea shipping was in its decay, though it seems fairly certain that Mecca had some importance before then, at least as a " station " on the road from Yemen up through the Hijâz.

Teima, as we have seen, was the great focus in the north: it connected with Babylon via Ha'il, with Egypt via Ma'an, Aila, and Sinai, and with Syria by the direct desert route to Bosra, as well as via Ma'an, Petra, and Bosra. Through Aila also it connected with Gaza and the Mediterranean trade, and with Palestine which became more easily accessible after the construction of Trajan's road. Another direct route led from Ha'il via Jawf and Kaf to Bosra, and at Jawf this connected by a branch road directly with Babylon. It is very probable that some of these roads, e.g. that direct from Teima to Bosra, were opened up in Byzantine times for the purpose of avoiding towns where customs were collected. At best these later lines of communication can only give an approximate idea of the ancient routes. The desert routes have left their traces only in the wells, settlements, and the deductions we may make from ground which seems suitable for caravans to travel.

NOTES TO CHAPTER V

(a) Saba'

[1] Strabo, 16, 4, 2.

[2] Theophrastus, *Hist. Plant.*, 9, 4. -MAMAAI = MAINAIA (?)

[3] Tiglath Pileser III mentions the Sabaeans amongst the tribes who offered tribute after his campaign in North Arabia ; cf. Rawlinson, *Cuneif. Inscr. W. Asia*, iii, 10, No. 2, 38, etc. P. Rost, *Die Keilschrifttexte Tiglat-Pileser's III*, Leipzig, 1893.

[4] Winckler, *Die Keilschrifttexte Sargons*, cf. Hommel, *Grundriss*, 580.

[5] Thureau-Dangin, op. cit., 148–50, (19) *pa-te-si Sa-bu-um*^{ki} *u ma-da Gu-te-bu-um*^{ki}*-ma.*

[6] Rawlinson, *Cuneif. Inscr. W. Asia*, ii, 67, 53 ; iii, 10, No. 2, 38. *sa-a-bu*^{ki}, v. 12, e. f. 49.

[7] *CIS.*, iv, 10 ; 37, 7 ; 40, 6, etc.

[8] Brockelmann, *Grundriss der vergl. Gramm. der semit. Sprachen*, Lpz., 1908, i, 129–30.

[9] Josephus, *Antiq.*, 2, 10, 2.

[10] Cf. J. Ludolfi (Leutholf), *Hist. Aethiopica*, Frankfurt, 1691, 57–8 : reasons, kindred language, and native tradition. So Scaliger, *de emend. temporum*, vi, cf. Propopius *B. Pers.*, i, 1, 19, but Scaliger thought they crossed in the time of Procopius, this Ludolf refutes. Cf. A. Kammerer, *Essai sur l'hist. antique de l'Abyssinie*, Paris, 1926, esp. chaps. i–v.

[11] Many more inscr. discovered by E. Glaser. Now *CIS.*, part iv, vol. i, in 4 fasc., pub. 1889, 1892, 1900, 1908. Vol. ii, only two fasc. as yet pub., 1911, 1914. Vol. iii to contain Minaean and Qatabanian inscr. Cf. also Pilter, " Index of S. Arabian proper names contained in the Corpus Inscr. Semit. (Pars. iv, fasc. 1–5), in *PSBA.*, 39 (1917), 99–112, 115–132, a most useful guide.

[12] Arnaud in *J. Asiat.*, 7^{e} série, 3 (1874), 3, etc.

[13] E. Glaser, *Zwei Inschr. über den Dammbruch von Marib*, in *Mitteil. d. Vorderasiat. Gesellsch.*, 1897.

[14] Cf. Lammens, " Qoran et Tradition," in *Rech. Sci. Relig.*, 1910, iii, and D. Margoliouth, " Origins of Arabic Poetry," in *JRAS.*, 1925, 417–49.

[15] Abu l'Feda, *Historia ante-Islamica*, ed. Fleischer, Leipzig, 1831, 114.

وقيل ان مأارب هى الهلك والمدينة سبا

[16] מרב in *CIS.*, iv, 353 (5), 10, etc., and Tom. ii, 407, 10. מריב in 19, 6 ; 28, 2, etc. (refs. to vol. iv, here and elsewhere, unless another vol. stated), descr. in vol. iv, fasc. ii, 20–2, plan bet. 20 and 21.

[17] Dio Cassius, 53, 29. *μέχρι γὰρ τῶν 'Αθλούλων καλουμένων χωρίου τινὸς ἐπιφανοῦς ἐχώρησαν.*

[18] *Admiralty Handbook of Arabia*, vol. i (all pub.), 175.

[19] Ibid., 176.

[20] *'uyun*, cf. Philby, *Heart of Arabia*, ii, 84.

[21] *Admiralty Handbook*, 177.

[22] Hamza, *Hist. Imper. Vet. Yoct.*, ed. Gottwaldt, 1844–8, p. 22.

[23] ^{mat}*A-ri-bi*, ^{mat}*A-rib-bi* ; cf. Hommel, *Grundriss*, 580.

(*b*) *Minaea*

[1] Cf. note (*a* 2) above.
[2] Pliny, *NH.*, 6, 28.
[3] Cf. *Encyc. Islam*, fasc. A (1924), p. 13, for refs. to this controversy.
[4] Strabo, 16, 45 ; cf. Müller, *Geogr. Graec. Min.*, i, 186.
[5] Cairo, Museum of Egyptian Antiquities, Room N, No. 431. Sarcophagus of merchant, with Minaean inscription. Inscr. and translation by Hommel in *PSBA.*, xvi (1894), 145–9, and D. H. Müller in *Weiner Zeitschr. f. d. Kunde des Morgenländers* (1894), 1 seqq.
[6] Halévy's inscr., Nos. 144–60.
[7] *Admiralty Handbook of Arabia*, i, 176.
[8] Halévy's inscr., 192–9, 443, 541 ; cf. Hollel, *Grundriss*, 679–85.

(*c*) *Qatabân*

[1] Theophrastus, *Hist. Plant.*, 9, 4, *Κιττίβαινα* var. *Καττάβαινα*.
[2] Strabo, 16, 4, 2. He says that the southernmost portion of Arabia is divided between four races, the Minaeans beside the Red Sea, capital Karna ; the Sabaei, capital Mariaba ; the *Καττραβανεῖς πρὸς τὰ στενὰ καὶ τὴν διάβασιν τοῦ Ἀραβίου κόλπου*, capital Tamna ; and the Chatramotitae with capital Kabatanon.
[3] Pliny, *NH.*, 6, 32 (28), " nations of Larendani, Catabani, and Gabanitae, who occupy a great many towns."
[4] Halévy, inscr., 405.
[5] *Adanē* in Philostorgius, *H. Eccl.*, 3, 4 ; *Athana* in Pliny, *NH.*, 6, 28, 32 ; Pomponius Mela calls it *Arabia* (Mela, 3, 8, 7).
[6] E. Glaser, *Punt und die südarabischen Reiche*, Berlin (*Mitt. d. vorderasiat. Ges.*, 1901, No. 1, 1–43 ; No. 2). Cf. O. Weber, *Studien*, and Dérenbourg in *Rev. d'Assyr.*, v, 117–28.
[7] Strabo, 16, 4, 4, Kattabania produces incense and myrrh, as does Chatramotita ; these are purchased by merchants from Elana (= Aqaba), which is at the north end of the Red Sea, near Gaza.
[8] Maṣ'udi, *Muruj*, 1, 79 ; 2, 142 ; 3, 143. *Tanbih*, 31. Cf. Ibn Hisham, 1, 4. Ibn Khaldun, *Tarjumān el-'ibar* (Bulaq ed.), ii, 1, 7–8.
[9] Al-Muqaddisi in *Bibl. Geogr. Arab.*, 3, 87, 94.
[10] Strabo, 16, 4, 2 ; cf. note (*c* 2) above.
[11] Pliny, *NH.*, 6, 32 ; 12, 32. Ptolemy, 6, 7, 37.
[12] Pliny, *NH.*, 12, 32.
[13] Pliny, *NH.*, 6, 32.
[14] Cf. Hommel, *Grundriss*, 656.

(*d*) *Hadramaut*

[1] Semitic ח is regularly transliterated in Greek as χ or '.
[2] Comte de Landberg, *Études*, ii, 295.
[3] L. Hirsch, *Reise in Südarabien*, 11.
[4] חדרן in *CIS.*, iv, 15, 40, 6 ; 41, 3 ; 69, 1, etc.
[5] Juba II cited by Pliny (*NH.*, 12, 30), calls the Atramitae, " a community of the Sabaeans ".
[6] Glaser, *Die Abessinier in Arabien und Afrika*, Munich, 1895.
[7] *Periplus*, 23, describes Charibaël as king of the Homeritae and Sabaei. *χαριβαὴλ ἔνθεσμος βασιλεὺς ἐθνῶν δύο, τοῦ τε Ὁμηρίτου καὶ τοῦ παρακειμένου λεγομένου Σαβαΐτου.*
[8] In bilingual inscription of Adulis (mid. fourth century A.D.) Aizanas ('Ezānā) calls himself " king of Axum, Himyar, and Saba' ". In S. Arabian inscr. Yemeni rulers recur about 378 and continue until 525, when the Abyssinians definitely conquered the country. Cf. Glaser, *Abessinier*, 5.

[9] Pliny, *NH.*, 12, 30, " The Atramitae, a community of the Sabaei, the capital of whose kingdom is Sabota situated on a very high mountain."

(*e*) *The Himyarites*

[1] Pliny, *NH.*, 6, 32. Report brought home from Gallus' expedition : " The most numerous tribes are the Homeritae and Minaei . . . the Cerbani and Agraei excel in warfare, and still more do the Chatramotitae . . . the territories of the Carrei are the most extensive and productive, but the Sabaei are the richest of all in the abundance of their spice bearing shrubs and gold mines." In the time of Gallus the Himyarites (Homeritae) were already a political power, though not yet apparently the leading one.

[2] *CIS.*, 140, (1) 4 ; 155, 2 ; 289, 17, etc.

[3] Cf. (*d* 7), above.

(*f*) *Land Routes through Arabia*

[1] " According to Ibn al-Mujawir bedawis as late as the thirteenth century ventured to travel right across the desert to Mirbaṭ and Zafar for the exchange of goods from 'Irak." J. H. Mordtmann in *Encyc. Islam*, i, 370.

[2] *Αἴλα, Αἰλάθ, Αἰλών, Ἤλια, Ailath, Aelath, Aila, etc.*, Aramaic, *Êlôn, Êlônâ.* Hebrew *Êlim, Êlath, Êl-Pâ'rân.*

[3] Cosmas Indicopleustes, Migne, *PG.*, 88, 217. Cosmas not only identified these inscriptions with the Israelites, but was confident that he could trace the marks of Pharaoh's chariot wheels.

[4] " Ailath . . . unde ex Aegypto Indiam et inde ad Aegyptum navigatur. Sedet autem ibi legio Romana cognomento Decima." Jerome in Migne, *PL.*, 23, 907.

[5] Pliny (*NH.*, 6, 26) calls Kane the chief port of the country. Cf. Ptolemy, 6, 7, 10. The *Periplus* (27) refers to Sabbatha whose kin dwells above Kane. It was visited by Haines and Wellsted in 1834, by Miles and Munzinger in 1870, by C. de Landberg in 1896. Many inscriptions in the vicinity.

CHAPTER VI

ARABIAN TRADE IN THE DAYS OF JUSTINIAN

(*a*) *The Age of Justinian*

In the sixth century the Roman Empire had become cosmopolitan in its character and its tastes, the frugal republican admired by such as Tacitus was very much out of fashion and the Byzantine citizen had habits of luxury which by long indulgence had become necessary to his comfort. As we are trained in our school days very largely on Livy and Tacitus and have learned to respect their somewhat reactionary ideals we are accustomed to regard this Byzantine period as something decadent and corrupt, an idea rather emphasized by the title of Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*, and from such satirists as Juvenal we have absorbed the notion that Oriental influence was the chief factor of corruption. Many of these ideas, however, are no more than conventional and somewhat artificial prejudices which we owe to the renascence when it was thought necessary to imitate the opinions of the Augustan age. It is quite possible to argue that the Byzantine period represents a fuller and richer life than any other age of Roman history, that the Institutes, Code, and Digest of Justinian are perhaps the supreme contribution of Rome to human culture, and that Asia gave very precious gifts to the Graeco-Roman world, as Professor Strzygowski has shown in the field of art and architecture on lines which might very well be extended to other fields. Certainly the age of Justinian presents a very brilliant picture with many attractive features, admittedly with some vicious elements whose more lurid aspects may be due to the fact that the history of that age is better known to us than that of some other periods

whose cruder features are softened by a half-light. Certainly the juristic work of Justinian's day has left a profound impression on the cultural history of western Europe, and the organization of Justinian's empire shows a particular type of Hellenism which has done most to shape the structure of Muslim society.

The reign of Justinian (A.D. 527–65) shows a transition period in the commercial life of the Near East and in the relations between the Hellenistic and Oriental worlds, not entirely due to the fuller light cast by the rich historical material of the time, but because there really were far-reaching changes in progress and leading up to new conditions which show the setting in which Islam developed.

Our chief sources of information about the Asiatic world at this period are :—

(i) Cosmas Indicopleustes, apparently a Nestorian, who between the years 535 and 547 wrote the " Christian Topography of the whole world " in which he uses information gained in the course of his travels in the Mediterranean, Red Sea, Persian Gulf, India, and Ceylon. He was at Adulis, the port of embarkation for India, in 525 when the king of Axum was preparing his ships for the invasion of Arabia. In earlier life he had been a merchant and travelled for purely commercial purposes, but was evidently a man of inquisitive mind, acute observation, and truthful : all those things which he refers to as having seen himself can be verified and he makes no claim to have seen fabulous creatures, though like all others of his age, he fully believed in them. Finally he retired from commerce and seems to have become a monk and to have spent his time in literary work, producing various theological and geographical treatises of which the " Christian topography " is the only one extant. The purpose of this book is to refute the heresy of those who suppose the world to be a sphere and to prove that it is a rectangle precisely similar to the Mosaic ark of the covenant in shape. The arguments he brings in support of this naturally seem

to us worthless and absurd, but the observations and descriptions drawn from his own experience which he uses to illustrate his arguments are of the utmost value, not the less because they lack literary grace and are simply the plain statements of a merchant who reports faithfully what he actually has seen and refrains from adorning his descriptions with conventional imagery.[1]

(ii) Procopius of Caesarea first appears as a private secretary to Belisarius in 527. For several years he accompanied that general in Persia, North Africa, and Sicily, and in 542 returned to Byzantium where he apparently devoted himself to literary pursuits. Of his various works the *de Bello Persico* naturally contains most information about Oriental matters, but some minor references of importance occur in the *de Bello Gothico*.[2]

(iii) Evagrius' *Ecclesiastical History* is, to some extent, an ecclesiastical supplement to Procopius, the author contenting himself with reference to that historian when dealing with any event which has already been related by him. The writer was born about 536, his history begins with the Council of Ephesus (431) and goes down to 536. The date of his death is not known. The last three books (iv–vi) dealing with the author's own days are naturally the most valuable.[3]

(iv) Agathias' *History* deals with the years 553–9 and is professedly a continuation of Procopius, but is in fact a work of greater literary and historical merit than any production of that writer. He did not commence his work until after the death of Justinian in 565, and the fourth book was not written until after the death of Khusraw in 577. The date of his own death is not known, conjecture varies between 582 and 594.[4]

(*b*) *The Silk Trade*

In Justinian's time the Hellenistic world was no longer self-supporting. Certain habits of luxury had taken strong hold and made themselves necessary and these could be satisfied

only by foreign trade. Chief amongst these were the use of spices and the use of silk. Spices as condiments and for burning as incense had become necessities and had to be procured at all cost: alike in the ceremonial of the court and in the ritual of the church incense was firmly established, and the requisite spices could be obtained only through Arabian and Indian trade. Silk had long been known, during the empire it had gradually become a more familiar luxury, and by the time of Justinian it was in urgent demand. (Athenaeus, xii, on extrav. of Syr.-Mac. in perfumes, cf. Plutarch: Sulla, 38.)

Probably the ἐσθῆτες Μηδικαί mentioned by Herodotus as robes of honour amongst the Persian were of silk: we have the evidence of Procopius that in his day such robes were of silk and admittedly the term μηδικά was synonymous with the later σηρικά.[1] Strabo refers to silk (σηρικά) and "honey made from reeds, without any bees", i.e. cane sugar, as amongst the wonders reported by Nearchus and the Macedonians who had been to India.[2] From the time of Alexander onwards silk, though rare and very costly, was known to the west, and Aristotle gives a fairly correct account of its production, an account copied by Pliny who had nothing to add to it.[3] It was then brought west in a raw form, i.e. as cocoons, which were unwound by artisans in the island of Cos, but the way Aristotle speaks, "it is said that this was first done in Cos," suggests that the industry went back to earlier times.

The true home of silk was China. In Chinese silk is called *si* and this seems to be the root from which the Greek σήρ was formed and so the Chinese were termed Σῆρες. Already in the time of Strabo silken garments were known as σηρικαί and no longer as μηδικαί. But silk was also produced in India from about the commencement of the Christian era[4] and so came west from both China and India. The best silk was the Chinese and this was carried by land across the oases of Sogdiana and then through Persian territory, thus placing the trade

entirely in Persian hands so that they could impose heavy duties and, when at war with Byzantium, could stop the traffic altogether, save for such small quantities as could be smuggled through by the Arabs at exorbitant rates. Even in the best of times the final stage westwards was in Arab hands and these desert carriers were granted safe-conducts (*ilaf*, cf. Maṣ'ûdi, *Murûj*, 3, 121) by the frontier officials on either side, a practice which in later days was exalted by Arab vanity into a legend of alliances sought by Caesar and the Great King. But this exposed merchandise to extortionate charges at the hands of the Arabs : at a later date we find that they considered a hundred per cent a reasonable demand. Meanwhile the Persians, of course, could stop the trade at will. Silk was now so greatly prized in the Byzantine world that these conditions were sorely felt.

Procopius tells us that about 530–1 Justinian entered into negotiations with the Ethiopians, i.e. the Abyssinians, then a strong and Christian power under the king of Axum, and proposed that they " by purchasing silk from the Indians and re-selling it to the Romans would themselves gain much money and cause benefit to the Romans in this respect alone that they would be no longer compelled to pay their money to the enemy. This is the silk of which they make the garments which the Greeks formerly called ' Medic ' but now term ' Seric ' . . . , but it was impossible for the Ethiopians to buy silk from the Indians because the Persian merchants always established themselves at the harbours where the Indian ships first put in, because they inhabit the adjoining country, and buy up the entire cargoes ".[5] Apparently the Indian silk trade was entirely in the hands of Indian seamen and this suggests that it did not come either from the north-west or from the Tamil country in the south-west, but from the Ganges area. Of course it could have been brought by land to the west coast, though it seems that this was not so, but that it was exported from the east coast, near

the locality of its production, and it was very rare for Greek or Arab seamen to go round to that coast. Thus Persia was able to secure a close monopoly in the Indian silk trade and this was sorely felt in the Byzantine Empire when there was war with Persia. Matters were a little eased by the peace concluded in 532, but in 540 war broke out again.

Justinian's negotiations with Axum were not his only attempt to break Persian monopoly. From the Black Sea routes were explored to the Caspian and thence to the Sogdianan oases without passing through Persian territory. It seems that the opening up, or perhaps reopening, of the more northerly route was partly due to the pioneer work of the Nestorian missionaries who had penetrated through Central Asia to the far east and to the south of India,—Cosmas Indicopleustes found a Christian church established in Ceylon,[6]—and partly to the entering into negotiations with the Turki tribes living north of the Persian frontier. Even more important was the exploit of two Nestorian monks who in 552 (or 554) arrived overland from China with some silkworms' eggs in a hollow cane[7]; from this a real silk industry was started which, after a few initial difficulties, developed on satisfactory lines and rendered the west less dependent on the Asiatic trade.

(c) *The Abyssinians and the Red Sea*

The Semitic speaking people of Abyssinia are obviously very closely allied in culture and language with the Minaeans, Sabaeans, and Himyarites of South Arabia and, through them, with the Akkadians of Mesopotamia. The only reasonable explanation of this alliance is to suppose that the Abyssinians were Arabian colonists who have preserved in their language some of the older South Arabian forms which survive from the days when Akkad and South Arabia were in close contact. It is by no means exceptional for colonists to preserve language forms and customs after they have become obsolete in their

original home. But we have no historical record of this colonization, though we have early evidence of contact between Arabia and the African side of the Red Sea. In Africa, as we have seen (cf. p. 88) there was a Nubian Saba' bearing the same name and somehow connected with the Saba' in Arabia; and Pliny, citing the authority of Juba, speaks of Arabs settled in Ethiopia.[1] Later we find the Abyssinian kings of Axum ruling over Saba', Raidan, and Himyar, but this does not prove colonization as it refers to a conquest which took place at a much later date. The only safe landing place on the African side of the southern end of the Red Sea was Adulis, now known as Zula,[2] and as this port figures in the early history of Abyssinia we may suppose that the movement of colonization began there and gradually spread inland until it reached the fertile plateau of Abyssinia. The earlier inhabitants of Abyssinia were of the Hamitic or sub-Semitic community and these still survive as hill tribes, presumably driven back into the more barren country by the invaders who seized the fertile pasture lands. It is hardly necessary to say that we cannot decide whether the present Abyssinians are of Semitic race, we can only say that thay have a cultural and linguistic affinity with South Arabia. No doubt colonization involved the presence of Arabian elements and presumably some of these survive, but there may have been affiliation of African stock and free intermarriage with indigenous elements or later African immigrants, so that possibly the Arabian element forms but a small percentage: but with these physiological problems we need not be concerned, we take "race" to denote social group, and here we can say that the invaders imposed their language and culture and so the resultant group is naturally Semitic.

The XXVth Dynasty of Egypt (712–663 B.C.) was Ethiopic but was not Semitic, so then, presumably, the colonization had not taken place: it would be incredible that Ethiopian monarchs capable of imposing their rule upon Egypt could have been

forced to submit to an alien invasion of their own country. In the Ptolemaic period (304–23 B.C.) Greek influence spread down into Nubia and along the Red Sea, but we cannot definitely prove Ptolemaic intercourse from any Greek traces at Adulis or in Abyssinia, as Greek influence continued to much later times. Our earliest historical material is a second century (A.D.) Greek inscription found at Adulis, and then a Greek inscription of king Aizanas of about A.D. 340 found by Salt at Axum[3] in which the king is described as ruler of Axum, Saba', Raidan, and Himyar. The same titles are given in the two earliest Ethiopic inscriptions, published by Dillmann,[4] but these belong to the fifth century when Abyssinia was Christian. Ethiopia has produced a fairly abundant literature of the Christian age, predominantly theological in character but with historical information of the Christian period, very little beyond legend, and that largely influenced by Jewish settlers of later times concerning the pre-Christian period. The *Periplus*[5] towards the end of the first century refers to a king of Axum named Zoskales as γραμμάτων Ἑλληνικῶν ἔμπειρος which indicates a spread of Greek culture inland from Adulis, or down through Nubia, in Ptolemaic or early Roman times, and also the existence of a kingdom of Axum in the first century.

Apparently the invading Semites formed various settlements and, somewhere about the beginning of the Christian era, the kings of Axum,[6] one of these settlements, extended their rule to the sea coast, including the port of Adulis (Zula), and so became known to the Greeks navigating the Red Sea. In the fourth century there was a Christian church in Axum and a certain degree of Hellenistic culture helped by the presence of Christianity but introduced by earlier influences. It was part of Justinian's policy to emphasize the solidarity of the church and to claim all Christians, whatever their country, not only as allies but as subjects who owed a duty of loyalty in return for the protection he showed himself ready on more

than one occasion to extend to them. In accordance with this policy he opened up negotiations with Abyssinia and tried to use it as a means of breaking the monopoly of Persia ; from this, as we have seen, very little was gained, but, to some extent, Abyssinia was drawn into contact with the Hellenistic world.

Christianity had passed down through Egypt and penetrated Nubia where a church existed until the sixteenth century,[7] and then proceeded south into Abyssinia where a church still survives. Both these churches, the Nubian and Abyssinian, were outposts of Greek culture and seem to have been active in missionary work. There are interesting traces of Christian and Byzantine influences right across the Sudan to the basins of the Benwe and the Niger, and even, perhaps, into the Congo country. It passed some time before the ninth century, by the Sudan to Dar Fur, to Ghana in northern Nigeria, to Benin, and to the Yoruba country. Some curious survivals of Christian beliefs and ritual survive amongst the older tribes in the area south of the line of Muslim influence which came in quite a different direction from the north-west. Thus in Borgu belief in " Kisra, a Jew who gave his life for the sins of mankind " survived until the middle of the nineteenth century, and there are many specimens of leather and metal work from those parts which show decorations of a definitely Byzantine and Christian character. There seems reason to believe that the elaborate court ceremonial observed by some of these tribes is based on that followed at the Byzantine imperial court.[8]

As far back as the fourth century A.D. we find traces of Abyssinian interference in Arabia. The Abyssinian kingdom of Axum apparently dates from about A.D. 340 and the king claimed to be ruler over Axum, Himyar, Raidan, and Saba', the last three in South Arabia.[9]

There are diverse traditions about the foundation of the Abyssinian Church. According to Rufinus it owed its origin to the labours of Frumentius who was consecrated bishop of

Axum by St. Athanasius some time before 368, and this is repeated by Socrates, Sozomon, and Theodoret.[10] The bishop of Axum was the metropolitan of the Abyssinian Church, but he had always had to receive his consecration from the patriarch of Alexandria, as the case still is, and so the Abyssinian Church preserved a close dependence on the Church of Egypt, and in the time of Justinian was regarded as an outlying part of the Alexandrian patriarchate. After the Monophysite schism the Alexandrian Church became Jacobite, as it still remains.

In 522 the king of Axum, prompted by the emperor of Byzantium, took active steps to assert his claims over South Arabia. The Himyarite kingdom was then in a state of decay chiefly due to its feudal character, lack of central control, and the incessant warfare between the various rival princes, and so seemed to offer itself as an easy prey. For long the Himyarites and the Abyssinians had disputed the control of the southern outlet of the Red Sea on which the sea-borne trade of the western world depended. Muslim tradition describes the expedition of 522 as due to a desire to avenge the slaughter of the Christians of Najran by the Jewish tyrant Dhu Nuwas, and says that Justinian had charged the Patriarch of Alexandria to direct the king of Axum to invade Arabia and protect the Christians. This tradition is based on the earlier Christian account which goes back to the sixth century and no doubt has its basis on fact. The sources of the story appear in the Syriac *Book of the Himyarites* which has been published at Lund by Axel Moberg in 1920–1,[11] in the Syriac Letter of *Simeon of Beth Arsham*,[12] and the Greek *Martyrium of S. Arethas*,[13] all descriptive of the persecution at Najran and the sufferings of the martyr Arethas. Now it must be noted that, for nearly two centuries before this date, the kings of Axum had claimed to rule over Himyar and Saba', so that the expedition of 522 was hardly an invasion in the ordinary sense but rather a punitive expedition which aimed at making the Axumite authority effective and

generally respected. Also it must be remarked that all these documents lay emphasis on the Axumite king's friendship for Arethas, who is described as the Abyssinian governor of Najran, and thus the expedition was not altogether due to the prompting of Justinian or to zeal for the Christian faith. From the *Martyrium* we learn that the Abyssinian attack on Arabia was helped by the co-operation of Byzantine ships in the Red Sea.

Nicephorus Callistus[14] gives an entirely different account of the beginnings of the Abyssinian Church. According to him the king of Axum, yet a pagan, heard of the martyrdom of Arethas and the violence of Dhu Nuwas and vowed that he would turn Christian if God helped him to chastise the Himyarites and reduce them to submission. Now John of Asia refers to such a vow, and to the letter of Simeon, so that we cannot entirely reject this tradition. Probably Christianity was promulgated in Abyssinia in the fourth century, as Rufinus relates, but the ruling dynasty did not embrace it until the sixth century, very much like the course of events in Hira, and this is the more likely as an inscription, first noted by Bent in 1892, of date rather later than A.D. 400 has an invocation of the goddess Astar showing that there were pagan Abyssinians at the end of the fourth century.[15]

After the 522 expedition the control of the Red Sea seems to have passed into the hands of the Abyssinians, though they acted at least nominally, as the mandatories of the Byzantines, and from 522 to the rise of Islam they controlled the southern end of the Red Sea and the trade with Africa, perhaps that with India as well.[16] Fränkel has pointed out that the older Arabic nautical terms are loan-words from the Abyssinian,[17] and the *Sira* tells us that when refugees went over to Africa to escape persecution in Mecca during the Prophet's lifetime, they made use of Abyssinian ships.[18] Thus, from the time of Justinian onwards, the Byzantine shipping interest in the Red

Sea began to decay and passed into the hands of the Abyssinians who, though professedly auxiliaries of the Byzantines, were really a new rival power seeking control over the trade route to India. To the Abyssinian invaders Arabic tradition ascribes the introduction of small-pox into Arabia.[19]

(d) The Plague

The small-pox, said to have been introduced into Arabia by the Abyssinians, was probably well known in Europe, if indeed it was the disease responsible for the great plague at Athens in the time of Pericles. Under Justinian a new disease appeared as a terrible visitant in the Byzantine empire. This was no less than the bubonic plague which probably came across from the far east where it has always been endemic. From the time of Justinian to the seventeenth century epidemics have occurred from time to time in Europe, the best known being the Black death in the fourteenth century and the Great Plague of London in 1665, though apparently western Europe was never free from the plague after its introduction in the fourteenth century until the eighteenth. It was then supposed to have passed away from the range of ordinary experience until in 1894 a great outbreak in Hong-Kong showed that it is still a very real danger. Procopius gives a very accurate description of its character, sufficiently precise to enable the disease to be diagnosed with confidence and to cause some persons to credit Procopius with a medical education, and his account is endorsed by Evagrius who was himself attacked with buboes at its first appearance in 542 when he was a boy of six, and who lost several of his children, his wife, many of his kindred and of his servants at its successive outbreaks which, at the time of his writing, had continued intermittently for more than 52 years.[1] This plague, says Evagrius, "took its rise from Ethiopia," and Procopius more precisely specifies the eastern or Pelusiac branch of the Nile as its home.[2] Contemporary writers seem to have

supposed that it was spontaneously engendered there, but that is hardly credible. No doubt its appearance there marks the last link of a chain which connects it with the far east: we may conjecture that it has been carried in baggage which came from India and was unpacked for the Byzantine market at the mouth of the Nile. The Plague Commission of 1908 concluded that bubonic plague in man is entirely dependent on the disease in the rat, and is usually carried from place to place by imported rat-fleas conveyed by people on their persons or in their baggage, and such presumably was its transmission from the far east to the mouth of the Nile. The introduction of the plague, therefore, seems to be accessory evidence of the use of the sea route from India in the sixth century. Undoubtedly the course of epidemics has had far-reaching effect in controlling the political and cultural history of mankind, far more, perhaps, than wars and imperial expansion, and it must be a matter of regret that so much yet remains unworked in this promising field.

NOTES TO CHAPTER VI

(a) The Age of Justinian

[1] The " Christian Topography " is published in vol. lxxxviii of Migne's *Patrologia Graeca*, and in E. O. Winstedt, *The Christian Topography of Cosmas Indicopleustes*, Camb., 1909.

[2] The first printed edition of Procopius was that of Hoeschelius at Augsburg in 1607, and was followed by an English translation in 1687. There have been various editions since of which the best is that of Dindorf in the *C. SS. Hist. Byz.*, Bonn, 1833–8. An edition with an English translation appears in the Loeb Classical Library (6 vols., first three only pub. as yet).

[3] Evagrius' *Eccles. Hist.* was first pub. by Stephanus in 1544, a better ed. by Valesius in 1673, now accessible edited by Bidez and Parmentier in Bury's *Byzantine Texts*, Lond., 1898.

[4] The first printed ed. of Agathias was produced at Leyden in 1594; the best ed. by Niebuhr in the *C. SS. Hist. Byz.*

(b) The Silk Trade

[1] Hdt., 3, 84; 7, 116. Procop., *B. Pers.*, 1, 20, 9–10.
[2] Strabo, 15, 1, 20.
[3] Aristot., *Hist. Anim.*, 5, 19; Pliny, *NH.*, 11, 26–7.
[4] R. C. Rawlley, *Silk Industry and Trade*, Lond., 1919.
[5] Procop., *B. Pers.*, 1, 20, 9–10.
[6] *Taprobane*, Cosmas, ed. Winstedt, p. 119.
[7] Procop., *B. Goth*, 4, 17. Zonaras, 2, 14, 69.

(c) The Abyssinians and the Red Sea

[1] Plin., *NH.*, 6, 32, 2.
[2] *Adulis* (Plin., *NH.*, 6, 172), *Ἀδούλει* (Procopius, Nonnosus), B. Pers., 1, 19; *Ἀδούλη* (*Periplus*), and *Ἀδούλη* (Ptolemy, 4, 7, 8). *Oppidum Adoulitôn* (Pliny, *NH.*, 6, 29–34).
[3] Boeckh, *Corp. Inscr. Graec.*, iii, 515, etc.
[4] *ZDMG.*, 7, 356.
[5] *Periplus*, 5.
[6] *Ἄξωμις* (Cosmas), *Ἄξουμις* (Stephanus), *Αὔξουμις* (Procopius), *Ἀξούμη* (Ptolemy), *Αὐξούμη* (Malalas); earlier use of *Αὐξουμῖται* in *Periplus*.
[7] Cf. Alvarez, *Viaggio nella Ethiopia*, Ramusio I, Venice, 1559. F. Ll. Griffith, *Nubian Texts of the Christian Period*, 1913. G. Roeder in *Zeitsch. f. Kirchengeschichte*, xxxiii, 364 seqq.
[8] Cf. L. Frobenius, *Voice of Africa*, Lond., 1913.
[9] Cf. Greek inscr., in note (3) above.
[10] Rufinus, *HE.*, 1, 9. Socrates, *HE.*, 1, 15. Sozomon, *HE.*, 2, 24. Theodoret, *HE.*, 1, 22. The last three merely reproduce the account given by Rufinus, who is the primary authority.
[11] A. Moberg, *The Book of the Himyarites*, Lund., 1920–1. Ib., with introd. and trs. (English), Lund., 1924.
[12] Asseman, *Bib. Or.*, 1, 364. Land, *Anecdota Syriaca*, 3, 235.
[13] Boissonade, *Anecdot. Graeca*, 5, 1.
[14] Nicephorus Callistus, in Migne, *PG.*, cxlvii, 301–4.

[15] D. H. Müller, *Epigraphische Denkmälern aus Abessinien*, Wien, 1894, 37–8.
[16] Cosmas, ed. Winstedt, 70 (= 99 D.), *καὶ ἐν τῇ ἐσωτέρᾳ Ἰνδίᾳ καὶ ἐν τῇ Περσίδι.*
[17] Fränkel, *Arämäische Fremdwörter*, 210–11, 214.
[18] Ibn Hisham, 783, 9–10.
[19] Ibn Hisham, 461. Azraqi, 2, 97–8. Waqidi (Kremer), 106, 8. Tabari, *Ann.*, 1, 1340, 11.

(*d*) *The Plague*

[1] Procop., *B. Pers.*, 2, 22–3. Evagrius, 4, 29.
[2] Procop., *B. Pers.*, 2, 22, 6. *ἤρξατο μὲν ἐξ Αἰγυπτίων οἳ ᾤκηνται ἐν Πηλουσίῳ.*

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CHAPTER VII

CHRISTIANITY AND THE ARABS

(a) *The Greek Element in Christianity*

There can be no doubt that Christianity played a very important part in spreading Hellenistic culture amongst the Arabs and so preparing the ground for Islam. Christianity was one of the Oriental religions which spread through the Roman Empire under the early principate, and so had certain parallels at least in its first expansion, with such as the cults of Isis, of Mithras, and the astral worship of the Chaldaeans; more especially with the first of these, for there we find the formation of a purely Hellenistic religion on a basis of Egyptian tradition, though its votaries were not recognized as co-religionists by the native Egyptian worshippers of Isis. This development of a Hellenized cult, expressing a moral monotheism conformable to neo-Hellenist, and more especially to Alexandrian, philosophy, so far divergent from its Oriental source as to be non-recognizable by its eastern votaries, is a curious parallel with Christianity which also was of Oriental origin and had an Oriental story as its nucleus, but developed on such peculiarly Greek lines that it was entirely estranged from the Judaism within which it had first taken form. Though Jewish in origin, it was very early brought into contact with the left wing of Hellenistic Judaism which was already tending to discard the Levitical law and had absorbed a broad humanitarian spirit from current Greek philosophy, and more especially from Stoicism.

The Hellenistic development of Christianity is very fully illustrated by the *Acts* and *Epistles* in the New Testament. There we find described the growing alienation between the Jews

who adhered to the Levitical law and the Christians who, led by St. Paul, advanced boldly in disregard of the traditional ritual requirements, and the protests and hesitations of those within the Christian community who regarded the Pauline policy with disquiet. At the time Palestinian Judaism was reactionary in character and tending to draw back from the Hellenistic life of the Mediterranean littoral to a more strictly nationalist and Hebrew atmosphere. In the New Testament it is already obvious that a definite separation is imminent, but the final break seems to have been associated with the fall of the temple in A.D. 70: so long as the temple stood it had a certain command upon the allegiance of both Jews and Christians, and its disappearance severed the last link between them. It is true that we do find traces of a Judaistic Christianity at a later date, at least in Syria and Mesopotamia,—St. John Chrysostom found such traces at Antioch towards the end of the fourth century—but that Judaistic Christianity is due to Jewish influence brought to bear at a later period and is in no sense a survival of primitive conditions.[1]

Christianity grew and developed in the Graeco-Roman world of the Mediterranean, it breathed a purely Greek atmosphere, and absorbed an exclusively Greek culture. Gradually, as it spread back from the shores into the hinterland, it began to make use of various vernaculars, but in all such cases the vernacular speech as used by Christians is full of Greek loan-words and the literature is dominated by Greek models and saturated by Greek influence: even the early Roman Church was Greek speaking. The Christian writers of the second century show us a purely Hellenistic Christianity and the books of the Old Testament were familiar only in their Greek translations.

In this Hellenistic atmosphere and within the borders of the Roman Empire the Catholic Church gradually developed its organization and theology on Graeco-Roman lines, its organization copied from the civil administration of the empire,

its theology built up on the philosophy then current in the Hellenistic world. There were, it is true, Christian communities outside the empire and some of these, enjoying a greater degree of freedom than was possible under imperial rule which had already developed a strongly centralized policy, blossomed into a somewhat premature luxuriance. When the Roman Empire advancing eastwards incorporated the kingdom of Edessa in A.D. 216 it found a well-established and flourishing Christian Church there; and when the Parthians ceded five provinces in 297 the Romans found a church and bishop at Nisibis in the ceded territory. Already in the third century Christianity had spread through Mesopotamia. But the Mesopotamian Church, as described in the homilies of Aphrates (337–45), shows a very primitive and crude theology,[2] and the decrees of the Council of Seleucia (410) deal with an organization very far short of that developed in the Catholic Church. This crude and amorphous Christianity had its parallel in the early Keltic Church, and apparently in the Church of Hermas.[3] We must suppose that the Catholic Church developed in the great urban centres of the empire and then spread outwards in all directions until, with some difficulty, it absorbed the surviving fragments of the earlier strata of Christian life. This fits in with Professor Strzygowski's account of church architecture.[4] In Mesopotamia a local type of church was evolved at an early date when in those parts Christianity enjoyed perfect freedom under Parthian rule, and this type was that of a small domed building, for wood was scarce in Mesopotamia. Later on when Christianity attained toleration in the Roman Empire the Catholic Church preferred the long basilica with timber roof, familiar in the public law courts of the day, and forced this, with other fashions of its own, upon Mesopotamia to the exclusion of its own native architecture. The outspread of the Catholic Church may be pictured as a succession of centrifugal waves, each more intensely Hellenistic than its predecessor, making a series of new deposits

under which native characteristics were at least superficially covered.

The formation of theological schools on lines imitated from those of the philosophical academies was one of the features in which the eastern church was influenced by Hellenism. The earliest and most distinguished of these was the Catechetical School at Alexandria which was already in existence at the beginning of the third century. Soon after 231 Origen, exiled from Alexandria, founded a school at Caesarea, and about 270 Malchion inaugurated a similar school at Antioch. When Nisibis was taken over from the Persians in 297 a school was established there also, but this was on rather different lines for Nisibis was in Syriac speaking territory and the school devoted itself especially to rendering Greek theology and philosophy accessible to those who were accustomed to use the Syriac language, partly by teaching Greek, and partly by translating Greek authorities into Syriac. Syriac, it should be noted, is the form of Aramaic used in Christian literature. Aramaic was the language generally current in Asia west of the Tigris, Greek being confined to Antioch, the Greek colonies, and the sea coast. As used by Christian writers Syriac contains a number of loan-words from the Greek, many Greek particles (mostly superfluous), and to some extent imitations of Greek literary forms. Much of this was no more than an affectation and has left no mark on the Syriac dialects which still survive in northern Mesopotamia and in parts of the anti-Lebanon. The ancient home of Mesopotamian Christianity was Edessa, thence it spread to Nisibis, Seleucia, and elsewhere, but the choice of a frontier town such as Nisibis for a school must have had a distinctly missionary motive.

When, in 311, Constantine decreed the formal toleration of Christianity the Catholic Church was already organized on lines borrowed from the civil administration of the empire, and very shortly afterwards this organization was completed by the

formation of territorial dioceses and the gradation of the hierarchy as patriarchs, archbishops, bishops, etc. Its theology also was well developed and showed the adaptation of Christian doctrine to the neo-Platonic and neo-Aristotelian systems then in vogue in an eclectic combination,—the latter commentators holding that Plato and Aristotle could be reconciled in their philosophy, —and in this the lead was taken by the School of Alexandria. Even then there were slightly divergent tendencies at work in Antioch, but as yet those differences had not come forward prominently.

(*b*) *The Syriac Church*

Toleration and state recognition,—formal establishment did not come until 375,—were not unmixed boons to Christianity as a whole, and still less was this the case when Constantine declared war against Persia and proclaimed that he was the champion of Christendom. So far the church had enjoyed free toleration in Persia, but these developments aroused deep suspicion against Christians as enemy aliens. "They live in our land," said the Persian king, "but share the views of Caesar our enemy."[1] Hence arose persecution, chiefly confined to the neighbourhood of the army, the court, and the border land nearest to the Roman Empire, a persecution, be it noted, which was not directed against Christians for their religious tenets but against those who were regarded as more or less in the interest of the enemy. Constantine did not live to carry out his proposed expedition and it is one of the ironies of history that when at last it did move towards the Euphrates it was under the command of the Emperor Julian who was a professed opponent of Christianity.

We need not follow the details of that disastrous expedition and the death of Julian. His successor Jovian was glad to purchase a humilating peace and retire with the remnants of his army (A.D. 363). In the territory surrendered to Persia

by this peace was Nisibis and the Christian school, unwilling to remain there under a king who had so recently shown himself ill-disposed towards Christianity, migrated to Edessa.

Valens, who succeeded Jovian, planned another expedition against Persia and in 373 was able to inflict a severe defeat upon the Persians. In 379 Shapur II, who had been king of Persia since 309 and had been the one responsible for the persecution of the Christians, died, but his brother Ardashir II (379–83) continued to treat the Christians with severity. The next two kings, however, Shapur III (383–8) and Bahram IV (388–99), entered into alliance with the Byzantine emperor and treated the Christians with favour. Yazdgerd I, who became king in 399, was even more friendly towards the Byzantines and Christians and received an embassy from Byzantium to which a bishop named Marutha was attached as interpreter and adviser. As soon as Marutha's official duties at court were completed he turned his attention to Isaac the bishop of Seleucia and persuaded him to call a council (in 410) under the patronage of king Yazdgerd, at which the fully developed organization of the Catholic Church was adopted for the Christian community living within the borders of the Persian dominions, bishops were given strictly defined dioceses, and all were placed under the jurisdiction of the bishop of Seleucia who, with the title of "Catholicos" was to exercise patriarchal functions. All this was in conformity with the Canons which passed in the east as Nicene and are known as the "Arabic Nicene Canons" as they are extant in an Arabic redaction. They are not authentic products of the Nicene Council.[2] The Persian king was officially represented at the council of Seleucia, its decrees were ratified by him, and he granted recognition to the Christian Church as a self-governing corporate body having relation with the sovereign through its official head, a feudal status similar to that already conceded to the Jews in Lower Mesopotamia.

Part of the Syriac speaking Church was in Persia, and part was within the Byzantine Empire where was its metropolis Edessa. But the language barrier itself was an obstacle in the way of its complete conformity with the Greek Church. Syriac speaking Christians had their own local customs, their own version of the scriptures, and their own native writers and theologians, and so did not quite participate in the life of the Greek Church which had now become more centralized. The final effort to procure the complete Hellenization of the Syriac Church is associated with Rabbula, who was bishop of Edessa from 412 to 435, and who so far succeeded as to draw that church into the life of the Greek speaking Church at a time when that latter body was vexed with intense controversy which ultimately led to schism.

(*c*) *The Nestorian Church*

The controversies which arose in the Christian Church in the fifth century and produced serious schisms which have not been healed to this day centered in philosophical, or more precisely psychological, problems concerning the person of Christ. From this it followed that those controversies, fought out very bitterly by rival factions, did much to popularize a knowledge of the philosophical problems involved and to make every missionary a teacher of the neo-Aristotelian system on which those controversies were based and without which their drift could not be understood. Those disputes produced only a faint echo in the west, perhaps we might say that the Latin language did not lend itself very easily to the subtleties of the Greek writers on philosophy, and the Roman Church preserved its strict orthodoxy because it could not follow the discussions in the east. Twice a triumphant party, relying on the support of the secular arm, succeeded in ejecting all those who were unwilling to accept its doctrinal decisions, and each time the ejected faction, indignant at the way in which it had been

misunderstood and at the treatment it had received, made its appeal to those who lived beyond the Byzantine frontier and continued to fight out the controversy in a Syriac atmosphere, necessarily familiarizing the Syriac speaking community with the problems involved and so carrying out a propaganda of Hellenistic philosophy.

It is easy for the modern observer to deride the intense disputes which arose over details of philosophical definition, but the real basis of the matter was the problem whether religion could be brought absolutely into line with contemporary science. The leaders of the church held very definitely that this could and must be done: if science, as then understood, and religion were both true, they must be in agreement in all respects and the Incarnation of Christ must be capable of explanation in scientific terms. It was then, of course, assumed that science was final, no one in those days suspected that the very basis of science would have to be re-constructed or that scientific knowledge is at best partial and progressive.

The current neo-Aristotelian psychology taught that man consisted of three parts, a body, soul, and some other undefined element. The soul (ψυχή) could be accounted for by the operation of the nerves, etc., its activity was based on the sensations, and perceptions of the body and the faculty of memory: but Aristotle admitted that there was some other element in the form of abstract and a priori reasoning which was not based on experience and so must come from some other source.[1] The pagan commentator Alexander of Aphrodisias, dealing with this statement, frankly says that the source must be God, and this was accepted as the final statement of philosophy as to the nature of man. And so Christianity, led by the school of Alexandria, taught that man consisted of body, soul, and spirit, and that Christ was perfect man and also God. But Apollinaris, bishop of Laodicea, held that if in Christ there were body, soul, spirit proceeding from God, and also God the source

from which the spirit proceeded, it might be assumed more reasonably that the Divine Person in him replaced the spirit, that is to say that he contained the whole of which other men possessed only a part. This view was vehemently opposed by the Syrian school and the Alexandrian, one of the leading opponents being Theodore of Mopseustia (393–428) who argued that in that case Christ lacked a real humanity as he would possess only a human body and human soul, not a spirit: the Divine Person, he and his supporters held, must have come into a human being already complete in body, soul, and spirit. Some of the Syrian theologians, in the heat of controversy, overstated their case and asserted that Christ was already born into the world with complete humanity before the Deity entered into him, and so the Blessed Virgin was mother only of the man, not of the God. Such statement undoubtedly was made, but was not the considered teaching of Theodore or his pupil Theodoret, though western writers commonly ascribe these doctrines to them.

In 428 Nestorius, a monk of Antioch educated in the theology of Theodore, was made patriarch of Byzantium, and one of his chaplains preached anti-Apollinarianism in this extreme form. From this a controversy arose in which Cyril of Alexandria led the attack on Nestorius and in 431 a Council was held at Ephesus at which Nestorius and his followers were formally condemned and ejected from the church. These Nestorians still exist as a community claiming to be the Catholic Church and repudiating those who accepted the decrees of Ephesus as semi-Apollinarians. At first Rabbula, who was bishop of Edessa, was inclined to side with Nestorius, but he was won over by Cyril and strictly enforced the Ephesine decrees at Edessa until his death in 436, though he was clearly out of touch with the majority of his clergy and with the school in his cathedral city which was the great university of the Syriac speaking community and where the writings of Theodore of Mopseustia

were accepted as the standard of orthodoxy and translated into Syriac. At his death Ibas was made bishop (436–57): he had been a lecturer in the school and was one of those who had prepared the Syriac version of Theodore, so his episcopate was a definitely Nestorian reaction at Edessa and the school there became the headquarters of Nestorianism. Twice Ibas fell under censure, but he was held in such general esteem that he was allowed to resume office without recanting his opinions. All this was changed at his death in 457 and a new bishop, Nonnus, was appointed by Byzantine influence with strict orders to purge Edessa of its contumacy, and this he commenced to do with a heavy hand.

The result of this new policy was that a number of the lecturers of the school, led by a teacher named Barsauma, migrated across the frontier into Persian territory and were welcomed by the Catholicos of Seleucia who fully shared their views. The Catholicos took Barsauma to the Persian court and explained to the king how the Nestorians had been treated at Edessa, and asked that they might be allowed to live under the protection of the Persian king: Christians who accepted the decrees of Ephesus, he said, would be adherents of the Byzantine state church and loyal to the emperor, but those whom the state had persecuted as heretics and had expelled from their offices would be the heretic emperor's enemies and were ready to give loyal service to the King of Kings, he would allow them to live under his protection. In reply the Persian king promised his protection and favour, he formally recognized the Nestorians as the only Christians entitled to recognition, they and they alone were owners of the churches, monasteries, and other church property in his dominions, and the resources of the state would be at their disposal to turn out any Ephesines who were found in occupation. The Christian community was again recognized as an autonomous feudal group under the Catholicos of Seleucia, and it was now stated that only those who accepted the doctrines

maintained by the Catholicos were entitled to the privileges of membership in this community. Thus the Nestorians organized themselves as a church outside the Byzantine Empire, rejected the authority of the Greek bishops of Syria and admitted the Catholicos of Seleucia as their patriarch. The exiled school of Edessa re-formed itself at Nisibis, which had been its earlier home, and founded a branch school at Seleucia. In 457 Barsauma was made bishop of Nisibis and was also appointed official inspector of the frontier defences. Magna, another ex-lecturer of Edessa, was soon afterwards appointed Catholicos, and later on was employed as an ambassador to the emperor Zeno, for the Persian attitude was to welcome these highly educated Greeks and use them for state purposes. Narsis, also an ex-lecturer of Edessa, was made head of the school at Nisibis. "These three Nestorians preached and established their heresy everywhere and allowed bishops to have concubines as wives" says Bar Hebraeus (*Chron. Eccl.*, ii, 63), meaning that the Nestorian Church, reorganized on anti-Greek lines in 484, permitted bishops as well as priests to marry, whereas the Eastern Church has always forbidden the marriage of clergy after ordination, though preferring to ordain clergy who are already married and generally admitting only monks, who of course are celibate, to the episcopal office. The early Nestorians, partly inspired by a violent rancour against the Byzantine Church, partly desiring to fit in with Persian prejudices, modified its discipline on distinctly Oriental lines, permitting clergy to marry after ordination and requiring all monks to live in monasteries far removed from any town. In a purely Oriental atmosphere the Nestorian Church gradually decayed, chiefly because its offices tended to become hereditary, and this went on until the Catholicos Maraba (540–52) conducted a thorough reform and abolished most of the peculiarities introduced in 484.

The Nestorian Church, using Syriac in preference to Greek and taking up an attitude of loyalty to the Persian king and of

hostility to Byzantium, presented on Orientalized version of Christianity and consequently an Oriental version of Hellenistic philosophy. This produced a new factor in the Aramaic (Syriac) speaking community of Mesopotamia as great attention was paid to the teaching of philosophy, science, and psychology, all so intimately connected with the controversy which separated the Nestorians from the Byzantine Church. The Nestorians were great educationalists and we have detailed accounts of their curriculum,[2] they were energetic teachers of the neo-Aristotelian philosophy, translators of theological and philosophical works, and incidentally leaders in natural science and particularly in medical research. Very soon the Nestorian clergy began to be in high repute as physicians, especially at the Persian court, and more than one Catholicos was raised to his see by royal favour on account of his skill as a surgeon or his eminence in medicine.

The Nestorians were not exactly an established church in the same sense as the state church in the Byzantine Empire, but rather a feudal group with much the same rights as a province under a governor appointed by and responsible to the king. They were not permitted to make converts from the Zoroastrian religion, though they did so and some of the converts, including the reformer Maraba, rose to great eminence in the church, but they had a perfectly free hand amongst the other elements of the community. From Nisibis and Seleucia they spread up and down through Mesopotamia, except on the Upper Tigris where there was a Christian community of strongly anti-Nestorian colour, and then commenced missionary work southwards towards Arabia and eastwards towards India and China. In southern Mesopotamia about Hira they were especially strong and at the time of the Muslim invasion in the seventh century Hira was almost entirely Christian and Nestorian. No Arabic version of the scriptures or Arabic liturgy was produced, for Arabic had not yet attained the status of a literary language,

but the Christian Aramaic known as Syriac was employed for ecclesiastical purposes, just as the Arabs of Petra used Aramaic for inscriptions though talking Arabic. As a result the Arabs of Hira were bi-lingual, and through the medium of Syriac a considerable mass of Hellenistic scientific, philosophical, and theological material was accessible to them. Later on, when Hira was only a memory, the two Arab "camp towns", Kufa and Basra, carried on this cultural tradition in a Muslim atmosphere. The first beginnings of Arabic scholarship were in those towns, and the first material used in that scholarship was that which existed in Syriac translations and which was used in the curriculum of the Nestorian schools. To a very large extent the Nestorians were the connecting link between Hellenism and Islam.

Bearing in mind that the Arabs of Hira were an integral part of the Arab community, not a mere offshoot, but recognized leaders and, in the sixth century admitted to a titular suzerainty over the whole Arab race, we can see that this Nestorian influence must have told upon the Arabs generally. Nestorian missions penetrated Arabia itself. A trade route connected Hira with Nejran and Ibn Hisham reports the tradition that the Christian Church of Nejran was founded by a Syrian named Faymiyun (Phemion),[3] strongly suggesting a Nestorian mission along that trade route to South Arabia. The Qur'an, obliged to introduce many new words to deal with theological and philosophical ideas which had no recognized terminology in Arabic, most often employs loan-words from Aramaic and we may assume that such words most often entered the Arab vocabulary through the medium of Hira and the Nestorian teachers.

(*d*) *The Monophysite Church*

Turning back once more to 431, the date of the Nestorian schism, we find a new controversy produced within the

twenty years. Cyril of Alexandria died in 444 and his successor Dioscorus began a heresy hunt for those he suspected of Nestorianism. Then Eutyches, head of a monastery in Byzantium and a former friend of Cyril, put forth the doctrine that the human person of Christ consisted of body, soul, and spirit, but when the Divine Person became incarnate in this body the human spirit was re-absorbed in its source which, though apparently logical, was practically a return to Apollinarian views. For some years violent controversy raged on this view and three councils were held, one in 448 and two in 449, which only left strife more inflamed. At length, in 451, by imperial authority, a new council was held at Chalcedon where the teaching of Eutyches was condemned. The result was another schism in which those who held the "fusion" of the human spirit and the Deity in Christ, a more moderate statement of the doctrine of Eutyches, were cut off from the state church. The separatists, Monophysites as they were called by those who accepted the decrees of Chalcedon, did not migrate out of the empire like the Nestorians but remained a non-conforming body which caused infinite trouble and annoyance to the state church and the imperial court. Practically the whole of the Egyptian Church and a considerable section of the Syrian were Monophysite: some of the leading scholars and writers of the time belonged to that body, and before long they began to rival the Nestorians in missionary work, a duty in which the imperial state church was comparatively remiss.

Some ninety years after the Council of Chalcedon the Monophysites were a fugitive and hunted body. The imperial government gradually ceased to persecute the Nestorians as the leading members of that body had now removed across the frontier into Persia and turned all its resources against the Monophysites who, in Egypt and Palestine, were in open rebellion. About 540 the Monophysite Church seemed in a very precarious position: the patriarch of Alexandria was a prisoner in

Byzantium where he was debarred from ordaining bishops and it appeared that, when the few surviving bishops died out, the episcopal order would become extinct and so the Monophysites would cease to exist as a church, in spite of the fact that they had many adherents in Egypt and Syria. Monophysitism, however, was favoured by the Empress Theodora and it seems to be indicated that this was tacitly encouraged as a matter of policy so as to prevent the Monophysites from being driven to desperate measures by unrelieved rigour. In 548 the head of the B. Ghassan, the leading Arab tribe on the Syrian frontier, came to Byzantium on official business and took the occasion to approach the empress and ask that a bishop of Monophysite views might be consecrated for the Arab tribes who were unwilling to conform to the state church. Theodora then arranged, the government no doubt perfectly well aware of her plan but not interfering, that the exiled patriarch of Alexandria should consecrate two bishops, Theodore to be bishop of Bosra and to take the Arabs under his pastoral care, and Jacob to the titular see of Edessa, where there already was a bishop in communion with the state church, but in reality to exercise a roving commission in all the Monophysite communities where there was no bishop. Jacob never exercised his episcopal functions at Edessa but for thirty years, until his death in 578, travelled over Palestine, Syria, and Asia Minor, organizing the Monophysite churches, ordaining clergy and consecrating bishops, at first with the help of the bishops of Armenia who at that time were also Monophysite. During most of these travels he had to go in disguise and often had to encounter many risks. His efforts were crowned with success and by them the Monophysite Church was completely reorganized and furnished with a hierarchy, though its bishops, at least in Byzantine territory, had to exercise their office in secret. Jacob Burdeana "Jacob of the horse cloth", as he was nicknamed from his most frequent disguise, was the real

founder of the Monophysite Church as it exists to-day, and that church is called " Jacobite " after him.

The real strength of the Jacobites was in Egypt where, in spite of severe measures by the state, the main body of the church remained Monophysite: but they had a strong following in Syria and Asia Minor, and all the Arabs of the Syrian frontier adhered to them. Before long they spread across the frontier into Persian territory where Tagrit in Northern Mesopotamia was strictly Monophysite. They made the monastery of Mar Mattai, still further north in the hill country beyond Mosul, their headquarters and this was the residence of their metropolitan, the bishop of Tagrit, afterwards known as the Mafriana. From Mar Mattai and Tagrit their missionaries went out in all directions, the more easily because the Nestorian Church suffered a period of decay from 497 to 540, during which it was torn by rival factions supporting various claimants to the see of Seleucia, and when this was adjusted by the reformer Maraba (540–52) it was too late to deprive the Jacobites of the footing they had gained. The Nestorians tried to invoke the Persian king and for some time there was an unseemly struggle at the Persian court where both the Christian sects tried to get factions to support their claims. Theoretically the Nestorians had the better ground by reason of the privileges officially bestowed upon them, but in court intrigue theoretical justice counts for little against an adroit personality and such the Jacobites secured in Gabriel of Shiggar who was court physician to Khusraw II (596–628) and seems to have commanded an extraordinary influence with the king and his chief ministers.

Shiggar, Gabriel's home, south of Nisibis, had always been a Monophysite district like Tagrit and had already become noteworthy as a great centre of scientific, and especially of medical, studies. From the time of Gabriel it was still more famous and we have a series of Jacobite scientists and physicians who were worthy rivals of the Nestorian scholars.

Another distinguished Jacobite physician was Sergius, chief physician (ἀρχίατρος) of Reshaina, south-west of Nisibis, and a priest there (d. 536). He had studied at Alexandria and is noteworthy as the translator (into Syriac) of Aristotle's logic, Porphyry's *Isagoge*, and other works. Incidentally it may be noted that it was no unusual thing for the more ambitious Jacobite and Nestorian clergy to complete their studies at Alexandria, Antioch, or Byzantium, so that a living contact was maintained between the Syriac speaking Christians of Mesopotamia and the scholars of the Greek world. Of the two schismatic bodies, however, the Jacobites were intellectually the stronger and produced, in the course of the sixth and seventh centuries the larger and weightier literary output, and it was they who took the leading place in translating and commenting upon the later Greek exponents of the Aristotelian philosophy.

As the Nestorians were the means of permeating the Arabs of the Persian border with Hellenistic culture, so the Jacobites spread the influence of Hellenism amongst the Arabs of the Syrian frontier, and almost all we have said about the spread of Hellenism through Nestorian agency can be repeated of the Jacobites. The only difference is that the one was in contact with the Persian sphere of influence in the east, the other with the Byzantine sphere in the west. In later Muslim times we find clearer traces of Jacobite influence upon Arabic thought than of Nestorian.

(*e*) *Christian Penetration of Arabia*

The Arab community was in contact with all the three leading forms of Christianity prevalent in Asia. The Nestorians were strong at Hira and their missionaries passed out to the desert tribes and down to the kingdoms of the south. Tradition relates a visit paid by the Prophet to Syria when a youth and describes him as recognized as a prophet by a Christian hermit to whom the name of Bahira is usually given,[1] but who is also

called Nestor[2]: this possibly refers to some contact between him and a Nestorian missionary, at least it suggests that the Nestorian hermit was a familiar figure to the Arabs. At the same time the Monophysites counted the B. Ghassan and other tribes of the Syrian frontier as their adherents and those Arabs controlled the northern end of the great road up through the Hijâz, whilst the Abyssinians who invaded South Arabia were also Monophysites. This, no doubt, was a serious obstacle in the way of Christianity as the Arabs could hardly be prepossessed in favour of the religion of the invaders of their country. Also the state church of the Byzantine Empire, that which we commonly describe as the Greek Church, had a hold in the peninsula of Sinai where the numerous monasteries and hermitages were Greek, not Nestorian or Jacobite, and so remain to the present day. Sinai is in close contact with the North Hijâz and through it passes the trade route to Egypt. It seems, therefore, that all these main sections of the Christian community, the Nestorians, the Jacobites, and the Malkites or state church, were in contact with the Arabs, the two former having a considerable body of Arab adherents. Early Arabic poetry shows the Christian hermit as a familiar figure,[3] and the same appears in the Qur'an.[4]

There were Christian hermitages in the Wadi l-Qora which lies well in the interior, east of the Hijâz,[5] and monks were accustomed to attend the Arab fairs where they talked about religion to those who were disposed to listen.[6] As the tribal Arabs carefully exercised the traditional duties of hospitality and expected the same to be observed in their favour, the monks usually found it expedient to extend hospitality to passing Arabs, and this perhaps was a necessary precaution against such violence as Nilus experienced in Sinai.[7]

Philostorgus (*HE.*, 3, 4) says that Christianity was introduced into Arabia in the time of Constantine II (334–61). Perhaps he means that hermits then began to settle in the Syrian desert:

it is hardly credible that there were any Arab converts at that early date: or perhaps he refers to some Christian teacher who went into Arabia but whose efforts produced no permanent result. Arabic history relates that Christianity was introduced into South Arabia by a Syrian named Faymiyun (Phemion) and this probably contains a genuine tradition of Syrian origin.[8] There is a story of a Himyarite king named 'Abd Kelal who was a Christian,[9] but it is not easy to identify that king and the story is of comparatively late date.

The chief centre of Christianity in South Arabia was the city of Nejran, situated in the one part which was unquestionably fertile. On the eve of the appearance of Islam it had probably the wealthiest population in Arabia. It was in the centre of a settled agricultural area and was famous for the making of textiles in which silk was employed. Like many other Arabian towns it had also a leather industry and a manufacture of arms. The Yemeni garments which figure so often in early Arabic poetry were mostly produced here. Although in a very fertile district covered with agricultural villages, it was very near the great desert and was the southern terminus of a trade route which went up to Hira. It seems reasonable to suppose that it was by this route that Christianity passed down to the south, and so we may regard Najran as an outlying colony of the Syrian Church.

Najran seems to have had a far more developed political life than other Arabian towns, Mecca and Medina not excepted. It was ruled by a triumvirate consisting of *sayyid*, *'aqib*, and bishop. The *sayyid* acted as chief in the usual manner of Arab tribal leaders, he dealt with all external affairs, arranged treaties, controlled commerce, acted as host at the periodical fairs, and commanded the military forces. The *'aqib* seems to have dealt only with internal affairs, to have administered the municipality, and policed the city. The bishop was supreme in all ecclesiastical affairs and ruled the clergy and monks who formed a considerable

portion of the community. But the supreme government was in the hands of these three acting together. Envied by the Arabs generally for their great wealth, the Najranites were also held in great esteem for their nobility, indeed the ancient poets seem to have regarded them as the noblest of the Arabs,[10] this, of course, at a date much earlier than the pretensions of the Quraysh of Mecca, whose repute for nobility seems to have been generally recognized only after the spread of Islam and to have rested mainly on kinship with the Prophet.

Like Mecca Najran had a Ka'ba, and this possibly implies a sanctuary and place of pilgrimage in pre-Christian times. In the later pre-Islamic age, however, the word is used to denote the great church there, the cathedral of the bishop. This is described as a very splendid edifice adorned with marbles and mosaics given by the Byzantine emperor.[11] In this there is nothing incredible. The Byzantine government was extremely anxious to create a " sphere of influence " in West Arabia and mosaics, we know, were often amongst the gifts used to win over friends to the Byzantine Empire. On such grounds the *Sîra* very naturally refers to Nejran as being of the religion of the " king ", i.e. the Byzantine Emperor.[12] There can be little doubt, however, that Nejran was Monophysite, but no doubt the strict orthodoxy of Byzantium was not applied to dealings with a place which was so urgently wanted as a counterpoise to Persian influence in Arabia. Certainly the (later) bishop Abu Ḥaritha belonged to the tribe of Bakr, which was Monophysite. The most famous bishop in Arabia of the later pre-Islamic age was Qoss ibn Sa'ida, and he has been associated with Nejran, but Fr. Lammens has shown conclusively that this is baseless, the earlier authorities being entirely ignorant of any connexion between him and that city.[13] Around the bishop was a body of clergy and monks who must have done much to familiarize the Arabs with Christian institutions, and as Nejran was a place where an annual fair of exceptional

importance was held it is very probable that monks and clergy used this fair as a means of getting in touch with the heathen Arabs.

Nejran remained a Christian city into Muslim times, until its inhabitants were expelled by the Khalif 'Umar. Most of the exiles went to 'Iraq and there founded a colony which they called Nejran. After this expulsion the importance of the city declined and its trade passed to Sa'da.

In Nejran there was also a Jewish colony.[14] Apparently this colony enjoyed toleration and freedom under the triumvirate, but tradition relates that this was not always so. The most famous incident associated with the history of Nejran is the perfectly historical martyrdom of Arethas (Harith) and his companions,[15] and this is traditionally associated with an Arab chieftain named Dhu Nuwas who is said to have been a Jewish proselyte who persecuted the Christians and attacked Nejran because it was a Christian centre. Arethas was, no doubt, the sayyid of Nejran, but in some way he seems to have been also an agent of the Abyssinian government, or in alliance with it,—Abyssinia then posed as a protector of Christianity. Later historians describe him frankly as Abyssinian governor. The Abyssinians were already beginning to penetrate South Arabia and it is possible that the movement of Dhu Nuwas was a nationalist rising against Abyssinian influence, though it ultimately led to Abyssinian conquest. It is said that, after taking the city, Dhu Nuwas gave the Christians the choice between apostacy and death, and dug a trench in which fire was lighted and there he burned those who remained steadfast in their faith. To this the words of Qur'an 85, 4–8, are supposed to refer: "Cursed be the men of the trench, of the fire fed with fuel, when they sat round it, witnesses of what they inflicted on the believers. They did not torment them but for their faith in God, the Mighty, the Praiseworthy." But some commentators (e.g. al-Baghawi) think it refers to the Old Testament

narrative of the children in the burning fiery furnace, as related in the book of Daniel.

The Abyssinians invaded South Arabia in 522 and this invasion is usually explained as an expedition to chastise Dhu Nuwas and check the persecution of the Christians, but as we have already noted (cf. pp. 119–21) there were other motives at work as well.

The Abyssinian invaders met Dhu Nuwas, who was defeated and took to the mountains. Reinforced, they made a second attack in 525, again defeated Dhu Nuwas, and killed him. They then established a colony on the coast and ruled the *tihama* or low-lying littoral, but never succeeded in enforcing their authority further inland. This marks the downfall of the Himyaritic kingdom. Abyssinian rule, set up as a check to Persian aggression, lasted until 575 when South Arabia was conquered by the Persians. All through the sixth century the struggle between the Byzantine and Persian powers was being fought out in Arabia, Abyssinia acting as the representative of Byzantium.

After the 522 invasion the first Abyssinian governor was Sumaefa' or Esymphaeus,[16] but he was displaced by an ambitious official who was named Ashram and surnamed Abraha,[17] and he, after a vain attempt to set up as an independent ruler, obtained recognition as Abyssinian viceroy. Under the earlier Abyssinian rulers a Christian bishop named Gregentius was sent from Alexandria and appointed to a see formed at Taphar [18]: he was the reputed author of (i) the "Laws of the Himyarites" which will be found in Migne's *Patrologia Graeca* (lxxxvi, 568) and which are supposed to have been compiled at the request of Abraha, and of (ii) a "Dispute with the Jew Herbanus" (in Migne, *Pat. Graec.*, lxxxvi, 621) in which he triumphs over his adversary by the appearance of Christ in a vision and then baptizes five million Jews. The inscription on the dam of Marib actually names Abraha as the viceroy who restored

the dam after its destruction by a flood, and that inscription contains an invocation of the Holy Trinity in terms which are definitely Christian.[19] There can be no question as to the historical character of Abraha and bishop Gregentius, but it would appear that there had been several Abyssinian invasions, or attempted invasions, between the later part of the fourth century and 525 and subsequent Arabic tradition confused these and evolved an entirely unreliable chronology.

Tradition relates that Abraha sent an army against Mecca and that this army was led by a commander who rode upon an elephant, for which reason the year of the expedition went down to tradition as the "Year of the Elephant". One Sura of the Qur'an is supposed to refer to this event: "have ye not considered how your Lord dealt with the owners of the elephant?—did he not make their war end in confusion and send down on them birds in flocks casting them against hard stones so that he made them like straw consumed?" On this was built up the story that when Abraha's army was encamped before Mecca multitudes of birds threw stones upon the warriors and slew most of them.[20] But that legend is not in the Qur'an but is due to the conjectures of commentators who tried to get a literal meaning out of the text. Waqidi supposes that the army was killed by disease and that the birds are the dead bodies. Here we are confronted with a statement which no doubt was perfectly clear to Muhammad's contemporaries, but we are at fault as the extant interpretations are obviously built up on the Qur'anic text and convey no information save what could be conjectured by those who used that text: tradition adds nothing. Pere Lammens suggests that the whole story may have arisen from a mistaken use of *al-fil* "the elephant" for *Alfilas* the Byzantine naval (?) leader of the expedition to Yemen: the Abyssinian forces, we know, were conveyed across to Arabia in Greek ships and Cosmas Indicopleuste was at Adulis at the time

when they were fitting out the fleet there and saw the preparations.[21]

We are told that the result of Abraha's severe rule and its continuance by his two successors led to an appeal to the king of Persia, at the suggestion of the king of Hira, and that the Persians were thus provoked to conquer South Arabia. No doubt Abraha's severe rule implies that he tried to police the roads and make travelling safe and thus interfered with the traditional right of the Arab tribes to levy blackmail from travellers through their districts: from the earliest recorded times down to modern Turkish rule the unsettled Arabs have consistently offered resistance to every power claiming to control the country: though, no doubt, the Arabs of the settled towns and villages hoped in their own hearts for the success of the ruler even though a stranger: to the Meccans of Muhammad's time the appearance of one of the Bedwin seemed a very natural disguise for a devil to take and these settled communities must have detested the wild men of the desert very heartily. At the same time the Arabs were shrewd enough to see very clearly that Byzantium and Persia were eagerly competing for control of Arabia and were quite ready to play off one power against the other and did so when occasion offered. The Persians were already masters of the eastern side of Arabia and controlled the very important south-eastern corner which is now known as Oman, and had long been thrusting tentacles into the southern territories; but behind these rivalries we perceive the severe competition to get hold of the Indian trade and, on the part of Persia, to stop Arab smuggling across the frontier. It is very far from the conventional picture of the Arabs as semi-savage tribes living in primitive conditions and secluded from the rest of the world until drawn out by the expanding force of Islam. Arabia, so far from being secluded, was the area in which the world powers were pitted against one another and the Arabs cheerfully took their part in the game

of political intrigue. It must of course be borne in mind that the Arabs of Hira, who had secured some kind of hegemony in the Arab world, were definitely pro-Persian, at least until shortly before the rise of Islam.

The Abyssinians were Christians and Monophysites, following the lead of Alexandria. It seems fairly certain that the Christianity of Nejran also was Monophysite, though if it be that it came down in the first place from Hira we might suspect a Nestorian element as well. It is not too much to assume that the extremely philosophical controversy between these rival schools of Christianity were to some extent brought to the knowledge of the Arabs, and if so they must have obtained some knowledge of Greek psychology, even if of a superficial character. At any rate South Arabia was drawn into the common life of the Monophysite Church and Christianity, the vigorous teacher of Hellenistic philosophy, had penetrated into Arabia in several directions, clearly showing that it was then by no means the secluded country it is often assumed to have been. More than this, there was even a missionary expansion from Arabia, at least to Soqotra, where traces of Christianity long survived and perhaps can still be discerned in a somewhat degenerate form.[22] It must be noted that in Patristic literature " Indian " very often stands for " Arabian ".

NOTES TO CHAPTER VII

(a) Greek Element in Christianity

[1] Harnack, *History of Dogma*, bk. i, shows conclusively that historical Christianity was essentially Greek. A " Judaistic Christianity " may have existed but disappeared early. The arguments in Strzygowski's *Ursprung d. christ. Kirchenkunst* tend to show that, though of Oriental origin, it became entirely Hellenized, and then advanced eastward as the missionary of Hellenism.

[2] Labourt, *Le Christianisme dans l'empire perse*, 31 seqq.

[3] Conybeare, " Character of the heresy of the early British Church," in *Trans. of the Soc. of Cymnrod*, 1899, 84 seqq.

[4] Strzygowski, *Ursprung der chr. Kirchenkunst*, 1920, trans. by Dalton and Braunholtz as *Origins of Christian Church Art*, Oxford, 1923.

(b) The Syriac Church

[1] Shapur's letter cited in Bedjan, *Acta Martyrum et Sanctorum*, Leipzig, 1890, ii, 136.

[2] These Arabic canons in Brit. Mus. Add. 14526, 14528. Pub. Chabot, *Synod. Orientale*, 1902, 254 seqq.

(c) The Nestorian Church

[1] Aristotle, *de Anima*, iii (esp. 9, etc.); cf. R. D. Hicks, *Aristotle de anima*, lxxix seqq.

[2] Labourt, op. cit., ch. x, and J. B. Chabot, " L'école de Nisibe," in *J.S. Asiat.*, viii, 1898, 43, etc.

[3] Ibn Hisham, 5.

(e) Christianity in Arabia

[1] Ibn Hisham, 115. Tabari, *Annales*, ed. de Goeje, i, 1124. Cf. Hirschfeld, *New Researches*, 22. Another form of Bahira legend in *J. Amer. Or. Soc.*, 1889, clxxvii–clxxxi.

[2] Mas'udi, *Murûj*, i, 146, calls the hermit Sergius.

[3] Imru l'Qays, *Mu'allaqat*, 71–2. " Friend, see the lightning, it flashed and is gone like the brightness of two hands on a crowned pillar. Did its blaze flash ? or was it the lamp of a monk who dipped the twisted wisks in oil ? "

[4] Qur. 5, 85, " some of them are priests and monks."

[5] Lammens, *L'ancienne frontiere*, 80; *La Mecque*, 257.

[6] Lammens, *Taif*, 86; *La Mecque*, 257–8; Imru l'Qays, *Diwan*, refers to " monks with fringed robes at a festival ".

[7] Nilus in Migne, *PG.*, lxxix, 512–693.

[8] Ibn Hisham, 5. Tabari, *Annales*, i, 923–929.

[9] Abu l'Fida, 10; Hamza (ed. Gottwaldt), 34.

[10] *Aghani*, 10, 145; 17, 105, etc.

[11] Description in Bakri, *Mo'jam*, 756. Byzantine imperial gifts mentioned in Ibn Hisham, 401.

[12] الملك Ibn Hisham, 403.

[13] Lammens, *Le Califat de Yazid I*, Beyrouth, 1921, 332, note 4.

[14] Tabari, *Annales*, 1, 1729, 7.

[15] Cf. above, p. 119.

[16] Procopius, *B. Pers.*, 1, 10.

[17] Tabari, *Annales*, i, 925–7. John Malalas, *Chr.*, ii, 194, calls him "Auganes". In Theophanius, *Hist. Eccles.*, 207, he is "Aretha".

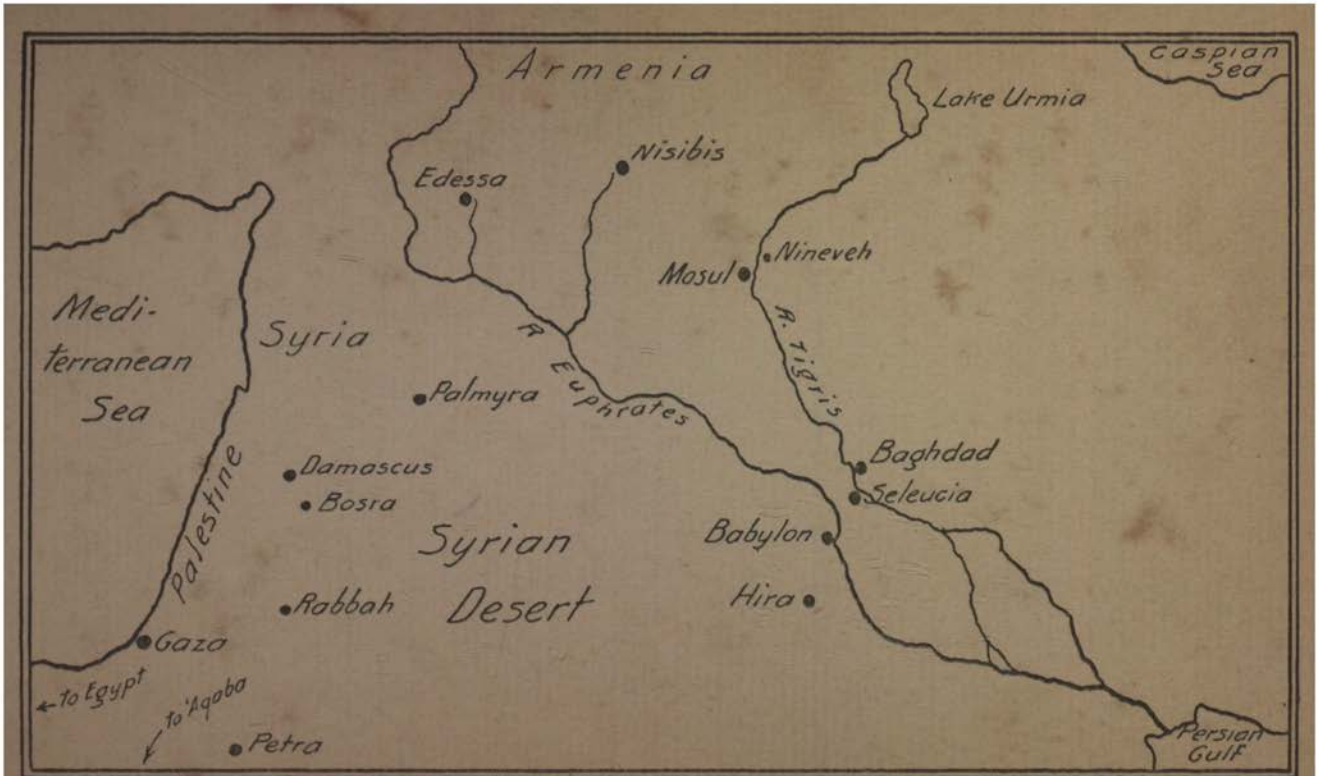
[18] "Taphar" in Procopius, *B. Pers.*, 1, 20. Cf. Ibn Hisham, 28–41, Tabari, *Annales*, 1, 930–45, the *Aghani*, 16, 72.

[19] Glaser, "Zwei Inschrift.," in *Mitt. d. Vorderas. Gesell.*, 1897, 360–488.

[20] Tabari, *Annales*, i, 934–6. The birds threw stones and "the body of every man touched by these stones was covered with pustules . . . All those who were touched by the stones had this eruption, which spread over the whole body." Cf. ref. to introduction of smallpox by the Abyssinians, p. 121.

[21] Cosmas Indicopleustes, in Migne, *PG.*, lxxxviii.

[22] Ibid., col. 169.



THE NORTHERN BORDERS OF ARABIA.

CHAPTER VIII

THE ARABS OF THE BORDER SETTLEMENTS

(*a*) *Conditions Favouring the Formation of Border States*

We must now turn our attention to those who had a most important function in directing the cultural life of the Arab community towards Hellenism, the Arabs settled on the frontiers of Persia and Syria who were an integral part of Arab tribal society, but at the same time were citizens, officials, and princes of Persia and Byzantium.

The map of Asia shows us that Arabia passes up in a long narrow tongue marked "the Syrian desert", and this formed a kind of wedge between the ancient kingdoms of Persia and Rome. It is in this part that Bevan's description holds true most completely: political ambition may write "Syria" across this desert territory but it is essentially a part of Arabia, the land of the Arabs, whose boundaries depend not on the conventions of ordered states but on the levels at which cultivation, and consequently settled agricultural life, necessarily comes to an end. More than once the neighbouring states have tried to extend their authority over this desert area, but so far it has always proved too costly in life and resources to continue to do so efficiently: Hadrian had to retire from the occupation of that territory because Rome was unwilling to stand the constant strain, and England has recently withdrawn for the same reason. The time-honoured policy has been to enlist the co-operation of some of the border tribes and use them as a rampart against the hungry nomad hosts of the deserts. Such was the policy of the late Ottoman Government, such is now becoming the policy of Great Britain and France, and was the

policy of Rome and Persia in the early centuries of the Christian era.

Throughout the whole period of history there has been a tendency for the tribes nearest the areas of settled cultivation to form more or less stable groups and, if restrained from predatory incursions, these groups have been willing to make terms and to act as a defence against their robber kinsmen. So long as the Nabataean kingdom existed it acted as a kind of " buffer state ", but when it came to an end and events proved that Rome could not hold the Syrian desert in control, that desert became a kind of debatable land across which Byzantines and Persians made incursions and whose lack of order gave peculiar opportunity to the Arab tribes who were able to move about in it far more rapidly than either of their neighbours.

(*b*) *The Arabs of Hira*

Settlements of Arabs were formed on the Parthian frontier in the later days of the Arsacid kings when the Parthian monarchy was in its decay and unable to secure its borders effectively. The Arabs strayed across the frontier and entered the fertile territory afterwards known as the Aswad. The inhabitants, vaguely spoken of as " Nabataeans " by the Arabic historians, a term which they applied to every Semitic speaking people settled down to agriculture, tried to resist, but the Parthian king was unable to give effectual assistance and so the invaders settled down and occupied the land. These newcomers had no desire to take part in agriculture, a pursuit they despised, but became rulers of the district where the earlier cultivators were left in their holdings but compelled to pay sums which might be described as tribute or as blackmail to their Arab rulers who gave themselves to a life of military enterprise, hunting, and sport, the only kind of life which they thought worth living.

After the fall of the Arsacid monarchy of Parthia and the establishment of a new Persian power under the Sasanid dynasty

the central government made an effort to expel these Arab intruders, but they were now too firmly settled to be got rid of and the only result was to weld them together and make a coherent Arab confederacy out of what had been a collection of scattered tribal groups: very much as Philistine aggression had forced the Israelites to unite and produce a central monarchy.[1] The first Sasanid king, Ardashir, besieged the Arab colony at Hadhr[2] and finally his son Shapur I, probably about A.D. 240 won a victory over them but was not able to expel them altogether.[3] The final arrangement was that Shapur recognized the settlement of the frontier Arabs as a subject group under their chieftain 'Amr b. Adi, who was formally invested as king and made his headquarters at Hira (Syr. ḥertâ = camp): he was recognized as ruler over all the territory occupied by the Arabs and as a prince of the Persian Empire, but he and his successors were required to receive investiture from the Great King, to do homage to him, and to act as guardians of the frontier against all comers, this military service being in lieu of taxes or tribute to Persia.[4] The Persian monarchy was essentially feudal, each provincial ruler was independent in all domestic concerns, his duty to the central government was strictly limited to stated conventional dues, and his subjects had no access to the sovereign save through him. Each such feudal prince held his appointment for life and very often the provincial community had the right to nominate a new ruler, though his appointment depended on the Great King's approval and he might, and sometimes did, select some other candidate who was then appointed over the head of the one chosen locally. The Jews of Lower Mesopotamia formed such an autonomous community under their own "Head of the Captivity". At the death of the Head some other was presented to the king for investiture, but if the king did not accept the candidate proposed he nevertheless selected someone of those whom the Jews recognized as of the lineage of David: he did not appoint

just anyone. When, at a later date, the Christian community received formal recognition it enjoyed a similar self-government under the Catholicos of Seleucia. The Persian monarchy was in theory absolute, but in reality acted with due regard to the will of the subject community and favoured a considerable degree of local autonomy which was in marked contrast to the centralization of the Byzantine system. The Arabs of Hira were recognized as a subject state self-governing under its own king, whose obligations to the Great King were limited to the duties specified by treaty. The Great King always invested a member of the Lakhmid tribe and of the family to which the first king had belonged, though there sometimes was a dispute as to which member of that family should succeed.

These Arabs who had invaded Persia as marauders in the days when the Arsacid kings had but a feeble hold over the land became an established and formally recognized part of the Persian Empire and were far better off as landlords of a wealthy province than they could ever have been as mere robbers. In this position they were the envied of all their race and were looked up to by the other Arabs as a kind of aristocracy. Some, who settled down to agriculture, lost caste thereby in the eyes of their desert kinsmen who always despised the agricultural population, but those who followed no other pursuits than war and hunting were greatly respected. Thus, though under Persian suzerainty, they remained an integral part of the Arab community: they sent delegates to all the great Arab fairs, and their lead carried great weight throughout Arabia. Through them the Persian Government was able to exercise some supervision over the desert tribes and obtain information as to their movements, and through them a great deal of Hellenistic culture filtered down through Arabia, for though subjects of Persia, they had no share in the cultural life of the Persians but took part in that Aramaic edition of Hellenism which had spread through Mesopotamia.

Under the third Sasanid king Hormuz I (or Bahram I, 272–3) we find the Persian Government forming colonies of prisoners taken in war with the Romans.[5] The Persians fully recognized the superior skill of the Greeks in most of the arts and crafts, and especially in engineering, architecture, and medicine, and orders were given to try to take prisoner men who possessed such skill.

These colonies were by no means internment camps, they were organized as self-governing cities with municipal government on Greek lines, recognized as feudal principalities, and enjoyed a considerable degree of royal favour. Besides this we find that prisoners of war were sometimes quartered on provincial nobles in a kind of honourable captivity, and some thus fell to the share of the Arab kings of Hira: it is probable that Christianity was first introduced into Hira by these captives. At that date Christianity was not tolerated in the Roman Empire, but there was no interference with the religion or any other domestic concerns of self-governing subordinate groups in Persia and so there, as in Armenia, there were Christian congregations living in the open profession of their religion at a time when the churches of Rome, Antioch, and Alexandria had a comparatively precarious and surreptitious existence. The Christians of Persia were not allowed to make converts from the official religion of Zoroaster and both they and their converts risked severe punishment when this happened, but in all the borderland—that is to say, in Mesopotamia—only a few Persian officials belonged to the Zoroastrian state religion, the native population was pagan. Very soon the Greeks and other Christians began missionary work amongst these Aramaic speaking natives and in due course a very considerable proportion was converted to Christianity. There were still pagan communities which adhered stubbornly to their own religious ideas, and in the south there was the wealthy and powerful Jewish colony, but Christianity was the religion which made

most rapid progress, and with that progress the Persian authorities did not interfere. Thus practically all the agricultural population about Hira was Christian some centuries before the rise of Islam, and many of the Arabs there were also converts, though the ruling Lakhmid dynasty remained pagan to a comparatively late period. Our first convincing proof of converts amongst the Lakhmids is in the latter part of the sixth century when we read of the princess Hind founding a monastery in Hira.[6]

King Yazdgird I of Persia (A.D. 399–420) sent his eldest son Bahram to be brought up amongst the Arabs of Hira in order that he might enjoy the benefits of an open air life and the pleasures of the chase. At that time Hira was ruled by Nu'man I who was a great builder of castles for which he employed a Greek architect.[7] At Yazdgird's death in 420 a court intrigue succeeded in setting a younger son named Khusraw on the throne as many of the nobles were disinclined to see the vigorous Bahram in command. Bahram, still a sojourner amongst the Arabs and with a great reputation as a warrior and hunter determined to assert his claims and in this was assisted by the Arabs, who were then ruled by Mundhir I. He succeeded in getting the crown which he wore until 438 and during his reign, very naturally, the Arabs of Hira were high in court favour and honour. This Mundhir seems to have been the "Alamundarus" whom Socrates describes as defeated by the Romans when Bararanes (Bahram) was king of Persia after the death of Isdigerdes (Yezdgird).[8]

In 502 the tribe of B. Bakr threatened the borders of Syria, but the Byzantine emperor Anastasius made a treaty with them and bought them off. At this they turned their attention to the Persian border and the Arabs of Hira, under Nu'man III, were unable to prevent their invasion. This was made a subject of reproach by the Persian king Qubadh, who finally, however, made terms with the newcomers and recognized them as part

of the Arab community of Hira, so that no one suffered very much except, perhaps, the cultivators of the soil who had to find the means to satisfy a larger number of masters. So far as Persia was concerned, it only meant that the defenders of the frontier were very strongly reinforced, though before long the B. Bakr showed that they were disposed to be rather insubordinate.

From Greek and Latin sources we learn that in 524 the emperor Justin sent two envoys named Simeon and Abraham to Hira to obtain the release of Timostrates and John, two Byzantine generals who were held as prisoners of war by Mundhir III of Hira.[9]

The sixth century, which we have now reached, was the age in which the Himyarite power was in decay (cf. 102), and with this we connect the general recognition of the king of Hira as overlord by the Arabs of South Arabia and most of the central tribes. With this was associated the advance of Persian power. Already in the early fourth century Shapur II had conquered the east coast of Arabia from el-Qatif (Gerrha) to Oman.[10] Now, about 573, Nu'man of Hira acted as advocate for the Yemeni Arabs whose territory had been invaded and occupied by the Abyssinians,[11] and the Great King sent an expedition which resulted in the extension of Persian power across South Arabia, the first viceroy Wahraz being appointed about 597. This shows a very real extension of the Persian "sphere of influence" in Arabia, an extension helped by the unpopularity of the Byzantines as allies of the Abyssinians. This was changed in the time of the Prophet when the Arabs of the Hijâz at least were definitely pro-Greek.

Hira seems to have reached its greatest independence under Mundhir III who was contemporary with Justinian. When the Byzantines made peace with Khusraw Anushirwan in 532 payments were made both to the Persian king and to Mundhir.[12] In spite, however, of the truce the Arabs of Hira continued to

carry on warfare with the Arabs of the Syrian frontier [13]: either the Persian king was unable to hold them in control, or he tacitly tolerated this method of annoying the Syrians. Justinian tried to buy him over from Persia,[14] but Mundhir was unwilling to enter into alliance with the B. Ghassan, his hereditary foes, and died fighting against them. Theophanius speaks of him as alive in 562,[15] and as peace was made between Rome and Persia in that year it gives us approximately the date of his death.

For some years there was no fighting between Byzantium and Persia and Mundhir, convinced that Persia was in decay, entered into negotiations with Byzantium and became a Byzantine ally. But Persia seemed to recover and Mundhir wavered so much in his new alliance that his loyalty was suspected, he was taken prisoner by the Byzantines, and in 580 the emperor Maurice exiled him to Sicily.[16]

The next king of Hira was Nu'man V whose wife Hind founded a monastery at Hira, and "this convent is called Dêr Hind to this day" (Tabari, *Ann.*, ii, 57).

In 605 the Lakhmid dynasty came to an end. Strained relations existed between Nu'man and the Great King and Nu'man thought it prudent to take refuge amongst the desert tribes: then he ventured back to plead his case before Khusraw but was put to death.[17] This took place about A.D. 620. The Persian king then appointed Iyas of the tribe of Tayy,[18] but this was resented by the B. Bakr who moved out of their settlements in a body and migrated to the Bahrayn, where for some years they lived in open revolt against Persia and so incidentally cut off communication between Persia and the east and south of Arabia. This marks the downfall of the Persian imperial expansion in Arabia. The B. Bakr was still in revolt seventy years later when the Muslim conquest took place.

Hira had now become a difficult problem for the Persians and at the death of Iyas in 614 it was reduced to the status of

an ordinary province and a Persian named Zadiya appointed as satrap.[19] This was very sorely resented by the Arabs of Hira and rendered them disposed to join the confederacy of tribes which the Prophet formed in the course of his ministry at Medina, but when, later on, the Muslims advanced eastwards under Abu Bakr the city of Hira for some time offered resistance. The Hira Arabs were ready enough to join with their kinsmen to avenge their grievances against the Persian king, but it was quite a different matter when they were invited to submit to the Muslim tribes and accept them as rulers.

(c) *The Arabs of the Syrian Frontier*

After the fall of Palmyra Roman history ignores the Arab tribes until the days of Julian, when it appears that there were Arabs settled in the lands east of the Syrian border and important enough to be sought as auxiliaries by the Romans. Evidently settlements were formed in the interval between Aurelian and Julian and for that period we have no historical sources other than the traditional history preserved by Muslim writers of much later dates, and such history must be received with great caution. On the Persian frontier there was a history of Hira to some extent perhaps preserved by the Persian records, and though none of these records survive they may have been used by the Arabic historians: so far as the history of Persia itself is concerned we know that Persian records were used, and used faithfully, by the Arabic writers. But on the Syrian side the contemporary history would have been Greek, and in history Greek material was not used by the Arabic writers: but most of that Greek material is still extant and accessible to us. Such material, therefore, we must take as our primary authority. The Arabic historians wrote when the frontier states had long passed away, their ideas are coloured by Islamic conditions, they speak of Arab kings and princes who treated on terms of equality with imperial Caesar, whilst we know that those

monarchs were merely tribal chieftains who made terms with subordinate officials on the frontiers.

According to the Arabic historian Hamza of Isfahan[1] the first tribe settled on the Syrian frontier and in treaty with the Romans was a branch of the Tonukhites who had been amongst the settlers on the Persian frontier but had moved away when the early Sasanid kings tried to bring the border tribes into subjection. On the face of it this seems extremely probable, and so we may accept that after the tribes on the Persian border had been reduced those who were unwilling to submit moved westwards somewhere about A.D. 230 and probably before the fall of Palmyra. Very likely those were the envious Arabs who served with Aurelian when he advanced against Palmyra, and their co-operation was rewarded by their official recognition as guardians of the frontier. Mas'udi says that the first tribe settled on the Syrian border was the Qoda'a, which was the name of the tribe of which the Tonukhites were a branch. He says that: "they made alliance with the kings of Rome and after they had entered the religion of the Christians they were made rulers over such of the Arabs as were settled in Syria."[2] It was only the vanity of later writers which represented those Arab tribes as making alliance with the Roman monarch: no doubt their negotiations were with the counts of the frontier provinces. Of course it is an anachronism to refer to their conversion to Christianity as a preliminary to their recognition; for one thing the Roman Empire itself was not then Christian. But these minor inaccuracies do not affect the main tradition that the Tonukhite branch of the Qoda'a tribe was the first formally recognized as settlers on the frontier. Mas'udi continues with the statement that the tribe of Salij afterwards entered Syria, conquered the Qoda'a, and were recognized as the ruling tribe: then "the Ghassan conquered the Arabs dwelling in Syria and so the Romans made them rulers over the Arabs".[3]

Coming down to the time of Julian's expedition of 363 we must note that Christianity received formal recognition and toleration in 330 and about the same time, or perhaps a little earlier, many monasteries and hermit cells were established in the Syrian desert, so that in the fourth century the Arabs began to be familiar with monks and hermits and to learn something about the Christian religion. The ecclesiastical historian Sozomon [4] tells us that about this time many of the Arabs became Christians and it seems likely enough that those settled on the frontier might be amongst these converts.

Julian set out from Antioch on his expedition against Persia in April, 363, and was able to collect "Saracen" auxiliaries who went with his army,[5] probably these were the B. Ghassan and other frontier tribes already recognized as allies. Later on, when the expedition met with disaster and the survivors had great difficulty in fighting their way back, the Saracens were their most troublesome foes,[6] but it is not clear whether these were the Syrian allies who turned against them, in itself likely enough, or the rival Arabs of Hira who were in Persian employ.

From 363 to about 529 we are left with very few references outside the Arabic historians who, after all, collected rather vague traditions. The ecclesiastical historian Socrates tells us that "as soon as the emperor (Valens) left Antioch the Saracens who had hitherto been allied with the Romans revolted against them under the leadership of their queen Mavia whose husband was dead. All the lands in the east were then vexed by the Saracens, but there savagery was allayed by Divine Providence in the way I now proceed to describe. A certain person named Moses, by birth a Saracen, who led a monastic life in the desert, was famed for his piety, faith, and miracles. The Saracen queen Mavia then desired that this person should be made bishop over her people and promised on these terms to end the war. The Roman leaders, regarding a peace

established on such terms as extremely advantageous, gave orders for it to be carried out at once, and so Moses was seized and brought in from the desert to Alexandria to be ordained priest, but on being presented for that purpose to Lucius, who then presided over the churches of that city, he refused to be ordained by him . . . (Moses) was taken by his friends to the mountains to receive ordination from the exiled bishops who lived there. His ordination put an end to the Saracen war ".[7] This was about A.D. 376 and then, if not before, the Arabs about the Syrian frontier were Christians. Perhaps this Mavia is the Mawiya of the Arabic historians who describe her as the widow of Harith II, though apparently confusing her with another "Mary" the wife of Harith abu Shammir (= Harith IV) who was a Christian princess of the tribe of Kinda.

Mawiya was followed by the five sons of Harith, several of whom were noted as builders of castles and monasteries, but it is impossible to say whether these reigned successively or ruled over different sections of the tribe, which is one of the difficulties which face us for the whole period down to Justinian, and this no doubt lies beneath the widely different estimates which the Arab historians make as to the number of kings of Ghassan.

Harith IV probably was the ruler whom the Greek historians mention as Arethas (*Ἀρέθας τοῦ Γαβάλα*) who in 529 was formally recognized as phylarch by Justinian and honoured with the rank of *patricius*,[8] and with him, it may be said, the reliable history of Ghassan begins. He was thus honoured after he had defeated Mundhir of Hira and had helped the Romans to put down a rebellion of the Samaritans. At the time Abu Carib was phylarch of the Arabs of Palestine: he also was loyal to Justinian and was rewarded with 20,000 prisoners as his share of the booty and sold them to the Persians and Abyssinians.[9] Probably it was in, or very soon after, 529 that these minor phylarches came to an end and the control

of the Syrian Arabs placed entirely in the hands of the chieftain of B. Ghassan.

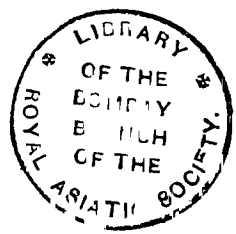
At that time all the tribes of the Syrian frontier were Christian and Monophysite. It was this Harith who, when he visited Byzantium, procured a Monophysite bishop to supervise the Arab tribes.[10] In 541 the B. Ghassan served in Mesopotamia under Belisarius, but set out on the return journey by an independent route of their own, having scored no successes over the Persians, and so Harith was suspected by the Byzantines of treacherous communication with the enemy.[11] In 544 Harith was again at war with Mundhir of Hira and his son was made prisoner: at that time many of the Arabs of Hira were Christians but the ruling dynasty was still pagan and we read that the captured prince was offered in sacrifice to the idol al-'Uzza.[12] Ten years later Harith defeated Mundhir and slew him. In 563, towards the end of Justinian's reign, he went to Byzantium and had a conference with the emperor. He died in 569 or 570.

The next ruler of the B. Ghassan was named al-Mundhir. At the beginning of his reign the Syrian border was attacked by the Arabs of Hira led by their king Qabus, but they were repelled by al-Mundhir and it is probably this victory which appears in the Arab poets as " the day of 'Ayn Ubagh ". The emperor Justin II who had succeeded Justinian in 565 was not well disposed towards the Arabs whom he regarded as treacherous and untrustworthy, and an attempt was made to have al-Mundhir assassinated. The attempt failed and its only result was that the B. Ghassan broke out in open rebellion and for three years refused any co-operation with the Byzantines. At the end of that time the renewal of Persian attacks on the frontier compelled the Byzantines to make overtures to the Arabs and enlist their goodwill. Justin II died in 578 and the next emperor Tiberius was at first friendly to the Arabs, and in 580 al-Mundhir, accompanied by two of his sons, visited Byzantium and he was

solemnly invested with the *tâgâ* or royal crown and recognized as king of the Arabs. As soon as he went home he raided Hira but contented himself with attacking the Arabs of the Persian border and did not venture to attack Persia itself. The result was distrust at Byzantium where al-Mundhir was suspected of a private understanding with the Persians. It is necessary to bear in mind that the Byzantine Government was an extremely jealous one and employed an elaborate system of espionage, as indeed the Persians also did [13]: we have, of course, no record of the reports, true or false, sent by these spies, and so are unable to estimate the justice or otherwise of the suspicions aroused. It was no easy thing to seize an Arab chieftain at the head of his tribe and the experience of Justin showed the imprudence of attempting assassination, so Tiberius resolved to use craft to get al-Mundhir into his hands. This was the task of the Syrian general Magnus who invited al-Mundhir to attend the consecration of a new church at Ḥuwwârîn and there he was taken prisoner and conveyed to Byzantium (in 581), and at the same time the *annonae* or subsidy paid to the border Arabs was stopped. At this al-Mundhir's sons led by Nu'man (*Νααμάν*) the elder, broke out in rebellion. Magnus was sent against the rebels and took Nu'man prisoner and brought him also to Byzantium. The capture of Nu'man was followed by a period of general anarchy amongst the Syrian Arabs, and at the time of the Persian invasion (in 613–14) they had disappeared as a fighting force. In spite of this, however, they retained a certain prestige amongst their Arab kinsmen and even in the days of Islam were regarded as of noble rank.

Through these border settlements the empires of Byzantium and Persia had direct contact with the dwellers in Arabia and distinct "spheres of influence". It was in the Byzantine sphere, extending down the western side of Arabia, that Islam arose and this accounts for the marked predominance of Hellenistic influences in Islam from the very beginning. The

real importance of these two groups of frontier Arabs was that they served as a link by which the Arab community, of which they were an integral part, was brought into close touch with the Persians and Byzantines and their culture, and this contact, it must be remembered, spread over a matter of four centuries.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NOTES TO CHAPTER VIII

(*b*) *Arabs of Hira*

[1] *Aghāni*, 3, 162.
[2] Classical Atra. Here Trajan was wounded in 116. In 165 under Marcus Aurelius Atra again became Roman.
[3] Maṣ'ūdī, *Murūj*, 2, 175–7, 185.
[4] *Aghāni*, 3, 133.
[5] *Chron. de Séert*, in Patrol. Orient., iv (1908), 222.
[6] The *Dēr Hind* or " Convent of Hind " at Hira.
[7] *Aghāni*, 1, 92.
[8] Socrates, *H. Eccl.*, 7, 18. Nonnosus in Photius, *Bibl.*, 3, 6.
[9] Procopius, *B. Pers.*, 1, 17.
[10] Cf. Sprenger, *Die alte Geogr. Arabiens*, Bern, 1875, 116, 130–7.
[11] *Aghāni*, 4, 29. Tabari, *Annales*, i, 912–13.
[12] Procopius, *B. Pers.*, 1, 22, 17–18. The " Endless Peace " by which the Romans gave up Pharangium and Bolum and undertook to pay the Persians, nominally for protecting the passes through the Caucasus, whilst the Persians gave up the fortresses of Lazica.
[13] Procopius, *B. Pers.*, 2, 28.
[14] Procopius, *B. Pers.*, 2, 16.
[15] Theophanius, 203.
[16] Evagrius, *H. Eccl.*, 5, 20 ; 6, 2. Niceph. Callist., 18, 10.
[17] Maṣ'ūdī, *Murūj*, 3, 207–8.
[18] *Aghāni*, 4, 351.
[19] Hamza, ed. Gottwaldt, 112. Abu l-Fida, *Hist. Anteislamica*, 126. Hamza calls him Zadûyâ.

(*c*) *Arabs of the Syrian Frontier*

[1] Hamza, ed. Gottwaldt, 4, 6, 28.
[2] Maṣ'ūdī, *Murûj*, 3, 214–15.
[3] Ib., 217.
[4] Sozomon, *HE.*, 6, 38.
[5] Ammon. Marcell, 23, 5, 1.
[6] Ib., 25, 6.
[7] Socrates, *HE.*, 4, 36. Cf. Sozomon, *HE.*, 6, 38. Theodoret, *HE.*, 4, 21.
[8] Recognized as phylarch, Procop., *B. Pers.*, 1, 17, made " patricius ", Theophanius, 203.
[9] John Malalas, 2, 181–2.
[10] Land, *Anecdota Syriaca*, 2, 254.
[11] Procop., *B. Pers.*, 1, 18.
[12] Procop., *B. Pers.*, 2, 28, 13. The king of Hira sacrifices Areta's son to Aphrodite
[13] Political spy '*ayn*, mentioned in *Aghani*, 1, 177–8 ; 11, 27, 8, etc. Such was the physician Theophilus who acted as Byzantine spy at Hira, cf. Lammens, *La Mecque*, 345.

CHAPTER IX

JEWISH PENETRATION OF ARABIA

(*a*) *Hellenistic Elements in Judaism*

Judaism had been drawn into the general stream of Hellenic life very thoroughly, not only because it shared the life of the Seleucid dominions and so existed for several centuries under Greek rule, but still more because of its outspread to Alexandria and round the shores of the Mediterranean. In due course came a strong reaction of anti-Greek feeling, part of a wide Oriental movement against Hellenism,[1] which produced the Maccabaean revolt against the Seleucids, and continuing to gather force evolved a more militant nationalism which led to serious revolts and so brought about, first the destruction of Jerusalem, and then the expulsion of the Jews from Judaea by Hadrian. Even after the Maccabaean revolt, however, there were strong Hellenistic tendencies among the Jews, and especially amongst those settled in Alexandria. We note evidence of this in the Jewish Aristotelian philosopher Aristobulus, the Platonist Philo, and in the compilation of apocryphal works with a distinct Stoic element, such as the book of Wisdom, IV Maccabees, etc. The Greek version of the Old Testament was commenced rather earlier, but some portion (Ecclesiastes, etc.) were probably not translated until well into the Christian era.[2]

In the course of the first century A.D. the Jews formed a standard and authorized version of the scripture text: gradually the Greek version was discarded and the use of Greek in the synagogue services forbidden,[3] and by the end of the second century A.D. Judaism had reverted entirely to a Hebrew-Aramaic

type and withdrawn from the intellectual life of the Graeco-Roman world to which it was afterwards re-introduced by Muslim teachers. Meanwhile what we might term the left wing, the more advanced Hellenistic section, had become Christian: indeed we may say that Christianity is the natural development of the more advanced Hellenizers who discarded the Levitical law and evolved from Judaism a simple monotheism which was in accord with the current tendency of Hellenistic speculation. It is rather tempting to explain the reactionary movement of rabbinical Judaism as a recoil from Christianity, but it seems more accurate to regard it as part of a nationalist and Oriental reaction against Hellenism which has a close parallel in the revival of the Zoroastrian religion and its reorganization on stricter lines which culminated in the essentially religious movement underlying the Sasanid revolt. No doubt the Christian controversy tended to define more sharply the outlines of rabbinical Judaism, but it was at most a secondary factor: the real motive power was at work before Christianity appeared and was part of the great anti-Hellenistic movement which advanced steadily across Asia and showed its aggressive character in the invasion of the Roman Empire by a number of Oriental cults.

The extremer Oriental tendencies of Judaism were greatly helped by the fall of Jerusalem. The end of the temple and the consequent decline of the official priesthood caused the intellectual life to centre in the synagogues and put it under the leadership of the rabbis whose influence was entirely anti-Hellenistic. The ancient law and the traditional ritual as developed in the Mishna and Gemara represent a Hebrew culture entirely alien from the Greek, and apparently the great academies of Nehardea (second–third centuries), Sora (third–eighth centuries) and Pumbadaitha (third–sixth centuries) were free from direct Hellenistic influences. After the repressive measures of Hadrian following the rebellion of Bar Kokab many of the Jews preferred the greater freedom

which prevailed on the eastern side of the Euphrates and took refuge with the Parthians. This was done the more readily because the Romans still required the Jews to pay the temple tribute, but the money went into the imperial fisc, whilst in Parthia the Jews were free from any such payment. At the Sasanid revolution the Jews got into trouble by their uncompromising loyalty to the Arsacid dynasty, until Rabbi Samuel explained matters and secured for them a continuance of the privileges they had enjoyed under Parthian rule.

In spite of the anti-Hellenistic movement, however, Jewish tradition does contain a certain amount of Graeco-Roman material including certain elements of the Roman law which, through a Jewish medium, have passed into Islam, so that Judaism was very evidently helping in the spread of Hellenistic culture.[4]

(*b*) *Jews and Idumaeans*

There was an outspread of Judaism into Arabia in the centuries immediately preceding the rise of Islam and Jewish colonies were founded there where Jewish customs and culture, including a certain Hellenistic element, were introduced. The chief of these was at Yathrib, afterwards known as Medina, the city where the Prophet spent the last ten years of his life and where the community of Islam took coherent shape and where the basis of its jurisprudence was laid. But there, to begin with, the Prophet assumed the customary law of the city; he varied it, and added to it, but the common law of Yathrib was the starting point and that common law was the law of the Jewish colony. So far therefore as Muslim jurisprudence is concerned we must admit this Jewish basis.

Here it is important to consider who were these Jewish colonists in Arabia? Were they actually Jews, and if so were they from Palestine, or from some land of the Diaspora, or were they proselytes who had accepted the Jewish religion but

otherwise retained their own cultural life? There were such proselytes, and they possibly outnumbered the Jews of Judaean descent. In the north of Arabia was the land of Edom, the land from which the confederate tribes of Israel had proceeded to the conquest of Canaan, and so perhaps to be regarded as the cradle of Judaism. The Israelites in Canaan were always conscious of a very close tie with the Edomites and we find the warning, "thou shalt not abhor an Edomite, for he is thy brother." [1]

In Seleucid days the Edomites, or Idumaeans, as they were then called, were on the very fringe of the kingdom of Antioch. In 312 B.C. Antigonus made an expedition to reduce them, but it did not effect any permanent result. Their real Hellenization seems to have arisen from their alliance with the Jews. In the Maccabaean wars they were at first suspicious of the revival of Judaean power and Judas Maccabaeus made an expedition against them [2]: some years later they were definitely conquered by Hyrcanus and compelled to be circumcised, so that "they were afterwards not other than Jews".[3] When the Romans began to take part in the politics of the Near East the Idumaean Antipaten helped them and thus the Idumaean dynasty to which Herod belonged was recognized by the Roman Government as ruling over Palestine. It was not until the death of Herod Agrippa II in A.D. 100 that this Idumaean family came to an end. Now those Idumaeans in North Arabia, though Jews by religion since the time of Hyrcanus to a large extent continued to live like Arabs according to their former customs and they undoubtedly served as a medium whereby the tribes of Arabia were brought into contact with the Hellenistic world over which the Jews were spread.

About the beginning of the Christian era we cease to hear of these Idumaeans as all the outlying tribes to the south and south-east of Palestine were absorbed into the Nabataean kingdom, and, says Strabo, "the Idumaeans are Nabataeans." [4] In fact the Nabataeans proper were a very ancient race which now

assumed the hegemony of the Arabs north of the Arabian peninsula and founded a state which had its capital at Petra. This kingdom grew up about the trade route crossing from Egypt to Mesopotamia.

(c) *Jewish Colonies in Arabia*

In the course of the first few centuries of the Christian era we hear that Jews had formed colonies in Arabia, but we must bear in mind that these may very well have been Idumaeans or northern Arabs who had adopted the Jewish religion. They established colonies at Taima, Fadak, Khaibar, in the Wadi l-Qora', and one, the largest and most important, at Yathrib, originally an Egyptian colony, on or near the trade route through the Hijâz and about 250 miles north of Mecca. The Mishna (second century) mentions Arabian Jews in a way which shows that they were well known and recognized at that time. *Shab.*, 6, 6, refers to Arabian women being permitted to go out in their large veils as the Median women were in their shawls, it being assumed in both cases that the women were Jewesses. In *Oholoth*, 18, 10, dealing with regulations relating to dwelling houses, mention is made of certain places where people may be living but to which these rules need not apply, "there are ten places to which the restrictions of domiciles do not apply, the tents of the Arabs, booths, huts, shelters, porches, open halls, baths, archery ranges, and camps."

In Yathrib the Jewish colonists were grouped in three tribes, all of which bore Arabic names, the B. Qainuqa', the B. an-Nadir, and the B. Quraiza. The two latter called themselves Kahinin "priestly" and so presumably claimed to be of the house of Aaron. Yaqut says that the Jews of Yathrib were Arabs who had turned Jews.[1] We may surmise that the B. Qainuqa' tribe possibly was North Arab, Idumaean or such-like, and the other two were Judaean who had moved down into Arabia after the destruction of the temple in A.D. 70, or after the

expulsion of the Jews from Judaea by Hadrian in A.D. 132.[2] Perhaps the legends which refer to an "Amorite", i.e. Aramaic, colonization in Arabia before the coming of the Jews convey recollections of an immigration of Idumaean or North Arabian tribes before the arrival of the Palestinian Jews.

In all their colonies in Arabia the Jews formed settled agricultural communities, for the Jews were an agricultural people until the days of the Babylonian academies: from the Babylonian *Gemara* and later productions we gather that agriculture then ceased to be familiar to them, it was a very curious economic change which affected the whole Jewish people in the course of the fourth and following centuries. The Arabian colonies were early enough to be, at least partly, agricultural in character. At Yathrib they also practised the art of working in metal—as smiths, armourers, and as jewellers. As craftsmen the Jews were welcome to the neighbouring Arabs, but as cultivators of the soil their presence was resented, for agriculture necessarily involved enroachment on the pasture lands of the nomadic Arabs. Near Yathrib were the two collateral tribes of Aus and B. Khazraj: tradition says that they were Yemeni Arabs who had come there about A.D. 300 when the Jews were already established in the city, but allowance must be made for the way in which Yemeni ancestry is claimed: perhaps it means no more than that the Arabs of Medina were rivals of those in Mecca and the Meccans were pro-Greek, therefore the men of Medina were pro-Persian and so of the Yemeni party. In the seventh century there was a strong feeling between these Bedwin and the Jewish colonists because the latter, by extending their agricultural area, were encroaching upon the land which the Bedwin regarded as their own pasture. Gradually the Bedwin got a hold upon the city because they were more warlike than the colonists, and reduced the Jews to the semi-servile position of "protected aliens" (*jâr*, plural *jiran*) under Arab rule. Just before the Hijra the Jewish tribes were in a depressed condition,

though still numerous and wealthy: they occupied the northern and eastern quarters of the city, each tribe living in its own quarter and in the same social conditions as their Arab neighbours. Such tribal quarters were practically autonomous villages, each with its own stronghold to which the tribe could retreat and secure its movable property in time of disturbance. The city was thus a kind of federal group of self-governing tribes, the whole united in a union for defence against external enemies, for hospitality towards visitors, and for the regulation and control of the market to which the Arabs resorted from other parts. Thus there were two kinds of law in force, the customary tribal law, and the common law of the market, this latter not of Arab origin but already established by the Jewish colonists and containing a certain measure of Roman law which had filtered down through the rabbinical academies of Galilee and Babylon and was an inheritance from the days when the more progressive and flourishing section of Judaism was drawing inspiration from Hellenism.

Not only were there Jewish colonies in the Hijâz but there was an active Jewish propaganda in the south, and whole tribes there were converts to Judaism. The most celebrated proselyte was Dhu Nuwas who is accredited with the persecution of the Christians at Nejran (cf. p. 119). We are told that he was a member of the ancient Yemenite royal family and was named Zor'a and surnamed Dhu Nuwas "the one with curly hair". As the sons of a former Yemenite king Rabi'a had migrated to Hira and only a few youthful representatives of the royal stock were left in Yemen, the supreme power was usurped by a tyrant named Hasan against whom Dhu Nuwas rebelled and established himself as king over Yemen and Himyar, at the same time publicly professing Judaism and assuming the name of Yusuf (Joseph). At that time Nejran was Christian and everyone visiting the city was compelled to profess Christianity. A Yemeni Jew and his two sons came there and were called upon

to become Christians: the two sons refused and were put to death, the father conformed but, as soon as he was able, escaped and fled to Dhu Nuwas who, enraged at this attack upon Judaism, gathered an army, attacked Nejran, and put to death the bishop and all the citizens who refused to become Jews. A Christian fugitive appealed to Caesar who, unable at the time to undertake so distant an expedition, called upon the king of Abyssinia and thus the Abyssinian expedition set out to avenge the Jewish attack upon Nejran. Such is the narrative of Tabari, Hamza, Abu l-Fida, and Arabic historians generally.[3] John of Asia, who calls Dhu Nuwas Dimyun king of the Himyarites, gives the reason that he interfered with Roman merchants who come to trade in Arabia: he said, "the Christians persecute the Jews who dwell in Roman lands and often slay them, wherefore I consider that these men are worthy of death."[4] According to this the primary motive was secular, namely Dimyun's interference with Christian (Roman) merchants, the religious motive, retaliation for ill-treatment of Jews in the Byzantine Empire, being then brought in as an excuse. The epistle of Simeon of Beth Arsham is evidently the basis of the Arabic tradition, at least in part. According to this the Yemeni king sent to Nejran, killed bishop Paul, burned the church and the priests, and compelled the people generally to abjure Christianity and profess Judaism.[5] The Arabic tradition is partly based on this, partly on an attempt to explain the reference in Qur. 85, 4–8, which may, or may not, refer to events at Nejran. In the Greek hymn of John Psaltes, Abbot Beth Aphthonius, on the martydom of Arethas and his companions, a persecution at Nejran is mentioned, but no reference is made to the Jews. Most important is the complete silence of Cosmas Indicopleustes who was at Anulis when the fleet for the invasion of Arabia was being fitted out and who makes no mention of any events at Nejran as leading to the expedition, though his main interests were definitely with the Christian Church. Yet the tradition

need not be rejected as absolutely baseless. Arabia was the arena in which the two great powers of Byzantium and Persia were in conflict and whilst the Christians were pro-Byzantine, it is easy to understand that the Jews would be pro-Persian, the Persians being their protectors and friends as the Greeks had been their persecutors. It is difficult to make out clearly how far Nejran was under Abyssinian influence, certainly it was the ally of Abyssinia. If the revolt of Dhu Nuwas was a nationalist movement against Abyssinian penetration, perhaps encouraged with Persian gold, it is easy to understand that, in so far as there was war between Dhu Nuwas and Nejran, this might have taken the colour of a Jewish effort against Christianity, though in fact the religious element was merely accidental and the contest formed part of a widespread political conflict. We need hardly go so far as Glaser (*Skizze*, 534), who regards the whole story of Dhu Nuwas as mere fiction. That all Jews who visited Nejran were forced to become Christians is inconsistent with the known existence of a Jewish colony in the city. Jewish inscriptions were found by Glaser in South Arabia, and the spread of Judaism there agrees with the suggestion that the Jews generally were under Persian protection and therefore pro-Persian in politics.

NOTES TO CHAPTER IX

(*a*) *Hellenistic Elements in Judaism*

[1] The Zoroastrian religion shows very similar phenomena. Obviously a very strict reform took place just about the beginning of the Christian era, and this culminated in the reorganization of the Zoroastrian or Mazdean church by Ardashir (circ. A.D. 226), and his formation of a canon for the Zend Avesta. Cf. Darmesteter, *Introd. to Zend Av.*, in Sacred Books of the East, part i (1880), pp. xxx, etc. With this must be connected the westward movement of Oriental cults into the Roman Empire. All this shows a steady Oriental reaction against the eastward movement of Hellenism led by Alexander and has close parallels in the history of art and architecture as shown by Professor Strzygowski. Possibly the Oriental movement owed its impetus to Buddhism in the first place (?).

[2] The lxx version contains work of various dates, probably the Pentateuch is the earliest as it is the least literary in its form. Most seems to be of Ptolemaic times, but Ecclesiastes and the Song show traces of a stricter literalism such as is associated with the later version of Aquila and so indicate influences non-existent when the earlier translations were made, e.g. the use of *σύν* to represent the Hebrew particle אֵת. Cf. H. B. Sweet, *Introduction to the Old Testament in Greek*, 1902, especially part i, ch. i–iv.

[3] For Greek synagogue liturgies, cf. Frankel, *Vorstudien*, 56, etc. König, *Einleitung*, 105, etc.

[4] *Rev. des Études Juives*, xxviii, 78; xliii, 4. E. Mittwoch, *Zur Entstehungsgeschichte des islamischen Gebets und Kultus*, Berlin, 1913.

(*b*) *Jews and Idumaeans*

[1] Deut. xxiii, 7.
[2] Josephus, *Antiq.*, 12, 8, 1.
[3] Josephus, *Antiq.*, 13, 9, 1.
[4] Strabo, 16, 34. *Ναβαταῖοι δ' εἰσὶν Ἰδουμαῖοι.*

(*c*) *Jewish Colonies in Arabia*

[1] Yaqut.
[2] *Aghani*, 19, 24.
[3] Tabari, *Ann.*, i, 946; ii, 34–5. Hamza, 38; Abu l'Fida, 10, etc.
[4] Asseman, *Bib. Orient.*, i, 361.
[5] Asseman, *Bib. Or.*, i, 364–79. Espec. 367, 368, 370.

CHAPTER X

MECCA AS A COMMERCIAL CENTRE

(a) *The Hijâz Trade Route*

In the very earliest period of recorded history the Arabs appear only as wild men disposed to make predatory incursions into the land occupied by the settled communites, and it was the task of the ancient empires of West Asia to hold back this threatening tide, and then we find that they opened up roads of communication across the deserts. The Arabs did not change their nature, no doubt predatory expeditions remain their ideal to this present day, but, unlike some other primitive races, they have been quite well able to adapt themselves to changed conditions: they are quite as ready to accept blackmail for not plundering as to plunder and are honourable and punctilious in carrying out their bargain with those who make them regular payments, not only abstaining from robbery, but protecting them from other robbers, and very often returning the payment when some accidental reason has prevented their protection from being effective. So with caravan routes over the desert. The Arab is extremely sensitive in his dignity and expects formal permission to be sought before any travellers cross the territory which he regards as the exclusive property of his tribe, and for this either presents or frank payment is due: but when once such an arrangement is made he is invariably faithful and conscientious, within the strict limitations of traditional usage, in carrying out his part of the bargain. These conditions show the first movement of the Arabs to adapt themselves to new circumstances, to make workable terms with their civilized neighbours, and to get from them an adequate return

for themselves. A still more definite capacity for progress is shown in the enterprise which, at a very early date, made them ready to act as carriers and convey merchandise carefully and faithfully from one settlement to another. It was a function which they were by nature well fitted to fulfil: they roamed far and wide across the wild lands, they knew the desert tracks, the wells, and the dangers of the waste and, whilst glad enough to plunder where they could, were satisfied to earn money and goods by trafficking when more adventurous methods were not practicable. Strabo very well describes every Arab as by nature a merchant and most often a thief.[1] In the book of Genesis the Arabs are represented under the generic type of their reputed ancestor Ishmael: "he will be a wild man; his hand against every man, and every man's hand against him." Later on in the same book we see that, "a company of Ishmaelites came from Gilead with their camels bearing spicery and balm and myrrh, going to carry it down into Egypt"[2]: and these Ishmaelites proved quite ready to purchase the youth Joseph and carry him away to be sold as a slave.[3]

The Arab is commonly described as avaricious, perhaps we ought to say that he has not yet learned to veil the cruder passions of humanity beneath the coverings affected by more advanced communities. No doubt he greatly desires wealth and would prefer to secure it by violence if possible, but if no other way is open is prepared to earn it peaceably. From remote antiquity also the settled communities, more advanced than the Arabs in the arts and crafts, have been able to make far better weapons than the desert men can fashion for themselves, and these he can only obtain by barter or theft. For this reason he is always inclined to hang round the settlements and he thus begins to learn the use of, and to acquire a taste for certain luxuries which can only be obtained from those in a more advanced state of cultural life than his own.

In early times most of the trade with South Arabia came up

through the Hijâz to Syria and Egypt through the medium of the Yemeni or Sabaean Arabs who took over the produce of Hadramaut, Dhofar, and imports from India, at San'a [4] and conveyed it up to Teima, but after the formation of a Nabataean kingdom the Nabataean Arabs seem to have caused the trade, even that to Egypt, to pass through their own hands and so the Yemenites came no further than el-'Ola or el-Hejra on the frontier. The older tradition of Arabian trade always represents the Sabaeans as the carriers.[5] But new conditions again arose after the Romans suppressed the Nabataean kingdom in A.D. 106. This was just after Hippalus had discovered the use of the monsoons and had opened up a direct route to India and perhaps that connects with the decay of the South Arabian kingdoms which took place about the same time. The Hijâzi Arabs, through whose territory the Yemenites had taken their caravans, no doubt paying tribute to the owners of the soil across which the road lay, as is the immemorial custom, must have looked with envious eyes at these wealthy merchants coming up from the south and, when the Himyarite power fell into decay, took the opportunity of seizing the control of the carrying trade for themselves. Possibly these changes were matters of very gradual development, but well before the seventh centuries the route through the Hijâz was entirely in the hands of the Arabs who dwelt there and who made their headquarters at Mecca, receiving goods from the Yemenites but carrying them north on their own account to the marts of Syria and Egypt, and perhaps also to Persia, though apparently some of the Persian trade was in the hands of the Arabs of Hira. It seems that caravans could and did go from Persia to Mecca, but Persian trade also went down through east Arabia by Gerrha (el-Qatif) which, about A.D. 320 became Persian territory.[6] We know that Meccan traders went down into Yemen,[7] but for the most part the Meccans were occupied in carrying north merchandise which was brought to Mecca by Yemenites, Abyssinians, and

others. From Mecca northwards the road was practically a Meccan monopoly and all merchandise had to pass through Meccan hands. The remuneration normally expected was 100 per cent of the value of the goods. But this was not simple extortion: good value was given for the heavy charge. Mecca had become a banking centre where payments could be made to many distant lands, and a clearing house of international commerce, and thus the carriage included great commercial facilities as well as insurance of the goods on a very perilous route. The only real rival of that route was the Red Sea passage between Aila and Adulis, but Byzantine shipping was in its decline and the Abyssinians had never developed their trade so far north. In the seventh century the Abyssinians sent a large part of their trade to Yemen, which was held by them, and thence it passed to Mecca, so that the East African traffic, as well as the South Arabian, and at least some of the Indian, centred in Mecca. In the period just prior to the Hijra, when the Byzantines and Persians were involved in a mortal struggle (604–28), came the golden age of Mecca and a very large part of the luxury trade of Byzantium depended on it. Even the Indian goods landed on the shores of the Persian Gulf were often brought across to Mecca and so reached the Graeco-Roman world, and this was done even when war was actually in progress and the Persians were making every effort to stop Byzantine trade altogether.

(*b*) *The City of Mecca*

When trade went through the Hijâz by the hands of the Yemeni or Sabaean Arabs Mecca already had some note as a "station" or halt upon the route and is so mentioned by Strabo,[1] but its real importance dates from the time when the Hijâzi Arabs themselves became carriers and made Mecca their business headquarters. Its importance was purely commercial: it did not become a city of any prestige or dignity until the days of Islam,

and it is only a retrospective devotion which caused the Arabs of later times to suppose that it had always been regarded with reverence and treated with honour. The basis of its importance was due to the fact that it was the halt on the trade route which had been chosen by the Arab carriers as their headquarters, and its selection as a halt in the first place seems to have been due to no other reason than the presence of a well known as Zem-zem, a very inferior supply of brackish water, round which the town grew up, whilst its selection as headquarters was mainly due to its being the place where the routes to Yemen, to Syria, and the north, and the cross-route to Gerrha, connected.

The leading tribe, or federation of tribes (?) at Mecca, and that to which the Prophet himself belonged, was that of the Quraysh, so called "from trading and getting profit".[2] The Quraysh proper, known as the Quraysh al-Bitah, or the Abtahi "those of the precincts", were divided into ten clans, Hashim, 'Umayya, Nawfal, Zohra, Asad, Taim, 'Adi, Makhzum, Gomah, and Sahm.[3] All those dwelt round the well Zem-zem. Others, Arabs and aliens, occupied the suburbs which spread out beyond this nucleus, and probably represent later settlers. Each tribe retained its tribal constitution and was self-governing in the same way as a desert tribe, so that Mecca was rather a collection of tribal camps than a city in the ordinary sense, but all joined together in a confederacy for the purpose of carrying on trade and conceded a position of honour to the person or persons who undertook to pay for the entertainment of visitors. In the carrying trade practically every citizen took part, and even the women had a stake in the goods sent forward.

Later writers speak of Mecca as a *jama'a* or republic,[4] but by this it can only be understood that the confederacy of tribes had a *mala'* or general assembly at which commercial enterprises were planned, and this was no doubt on the lines of the *majlis* or tribal council traditional amongst the desert tribes.

It seems that there were Byzantine agents in Mecca itself,[5] but these were commercial rather than political, though being in Byzantine employ we may assume that they served also as spies. Hirschfeld, using terms which are perhaps a little exaggerated, refers to the language of the Qur'an as not Arabic at all: he means that Qur'anic Arabic had a very large admixture of Aramaic words which were used whenever ideas need expression beyond the rather limited range of Arab thought, and this has received more detailed consideration from Fränkel.[6] The free use of Aramaic words is, of course, strong evidence of Syrian influence coming down the trade route and, in conjunction with the presence of Byzantine agents in Mecca, shows that it was by no means so remote or secluded as is sometimes supposed. In the time of the Prophet there were Meccan Arabs, like his kinsmen Waraqa, who were converts to Christianity, and also men like Zayd b. Harith who were Christian captives brought to the city.[7]

It is not surprising to find that there was an Abyssinian colony at Mecca,[8] although the Abyssinian conquest had never reached so far inland. The Meccan merchants, entirely devoted to a lucrative trade and to the fitting out of caravans, were little disposed to spend their time in police duties or in military enterprises, and so we find that they maintained a mercenary force known as the *Ahabish* or "Abyssinians", a body of sturdy Africans who acted as their guards. It is difficult to imagine anything further removed from the traditional picture of Arab life than this wealthy merchant city whose citizens had lost all taste for fighting and were content to employ a hired militia, and who had made their city a clearing house and banking centre for the trade of West Asia. It was in this extremely cosmopolitan centre, the city which had replaced the ancient Palmyra and the still more ancient Teima, that Islam had its cradle, and its cosmopolitan character very largely accounts for the mixed vocabulary of the Qur'an. It is very evident that Islam

cannot be described correctly as evolved amongst the simple Arabs of the desert, and it is equally obvious that classical Arabic, based on the Qur'an, cannot be taken as the pure language from which all other dialects have been derived by corruption or by admixture of alien elements: in such a city as Mecca it must have been liable to outside influences in the pre-Islamic age.

(c) *The Trading Caravans*

The caravans were important undertakings and usually conducted on a large scale. Strabo, who saw one arriving at Petra, compared it to an army, and Tabari mentions one with 2,500 camels.[1] Such a caravan could only move with very careful preparation, and its large size partly required for adequate protection against attack. Scouts were sent forward to collect and convey news and Ibn Hisham's *Sîra* describes such scouts going forward to Mecca when Abu Sofyan's caravan was threatened by the Prophet and his followers and calling out the Meccans to the rescue, thus leading to the battle of Badr.[2] Guides, known as *dalîl*, were employed, and it was their duty to provide beasts and equipment for those who took part: such guides were necessary for all journeys across the desert, and so we find the prophet, after escaping from Mecca, waiting for a *dalîl* to conduct him to Medina.[3] Distinct from the *dalîl* was the *khafir* or escort, usually a sayyid or princeling of note, who undertook to convoy the caravan with a body of his tribesmen. This was a lucrative office keenly sought by the desert chieftains, and it acted as a kind of insurance because the *khafir* undertook to make good any losses due to the attacks of desert tribes. At Palmyra statues were erected in honour of those who thus acted at their own cost, and there it seems that such an act of public generosity was the surest road to political importance. It was the right of the Arabs of Hira to provide this convoy for Persian caravans going down into

Arabia and their charges became so excessive that the Persians refused to pay them, with the result that the Arabs attacked the caravan and defeated the Persian escort. This was the famous Dhu Qar which Arab poets love to describe as a victory over Persia.[4] In the time of the Prophet it was customary to fit out two annual caravans which went up into Syria.[5] The heavy expenses of the caravan lay in the equipment, the hiring of guides and camel drivers, the tolls paid to every Arab tribe through whose territory it passed, and enough to the *Khafir* to make him willing to undertake compensation for any losses sustained on the way. We can understand that the Meccan merchants looked with no friendly eyes upon the predatory nomads of the desert and when Ibn Hisham's *Sîra* tells us how a devil, as it was supposed, came to Mecca with news of Muhammad's flight, he wore the disguise of a desert Arab.[6] To the Meccan merchants, no doubt, the Bedwin seemed very near akin to devils. Elsewhere we find that the citizens compared the nomads to wild beasts,[7] and the Qur'an itself shows traces of this dislike towards the desert Arabs who were singularly unresponsive to religion.[8] The commercial community in which Islam took its rise had very little in common with the nomads of the desert.

The caravans which went up to Syria had to use the marts in certain cities assigned them by the Byzantine Government. Like the *ancien regime* in France, the state took a paternal attitude and liked to interfere in all the affairs of the private life of its subjects, impatient of any kind of independent activity or initiative on the part of any who were not authorized officials. All foreign trade had to pass through official hands and to be under proper supervision. On the one hand this was a means of securing the taxes levied on all imports and enforcing the strict monopolies which took a prominent place in the artificially regulated economics of Byzantium, and on the other hand enabled the Government to watch the coming and going of

foreigners, in every one of whom a possible spy was suspected: and this suspicion was not without basis as the Byzantine Government maintained an elaborate spy system in Persia.

The Hijâz route entered Byzantine territory at Aila, the Biblical Elath, now 'Aqaba, which had now been annexed by Rome in A.D. 105 and made the station of the Xth Legion, a town then of considerable importance, whose bishop was one of the signatories of the Nicene decrees, but now dwindled to a mere village. Aila was situated at the head of the Gulf of 'Aqaba and was the terminus of the road which Trajan made from the Red Sea to Palestine. From this the caravan proceeded to Gaza where merchandise was brought into touch with the Mediterranean trade, whilst that intended for Syria proceeded up through the Syrian desert to Bosra. In the legendary account of the Prophet's "Night Journey", in which he was miraculously carried through the air from Mecca to Jerusalem, we are told how, as he passed over Gaza, he saw the caravans of merchants thronging along the road. Bosra, which Diocletian had made the capital of the province of Arabia, was the great mart on the Syrian frontier, not like Hira a semi-independent Arab town, but a Government depot under the supervision of an imperial official. Here the caravans from Mecca handed over their goods to the purchasers appointed by the State, though apparently smuggling was not infrequent and there was a contraband trade in arms whose sale to the Arabs was illegal.

The *Sîra* describes the Prophet himself as more than once taking part in these expeditions: one account relates how he was taken up to Bosra when he was only twelve years old,[9] another speaks of him as going there when he was twenty-five years old, the company of fellow Quraysh.[10] These narratives are forms of the Bahira legend, one of the most difficult traditions of the Prophet's early life, but that he did go up into Syria is

extremely probable : we might safely assume that in the seventh century every adult Meccan had made the journey to Bosra or Hira at least once. It is not, however, proved by the use of Aramaic words in the Qur'an for, as we have seen, in such a cosmopolitan town as Mecca foreign words could not have been unknown.

NOTES TO CHAPTER X

(*a*) *The Hijâz Trade Route*

[1] Strabo, 16, 4, 23.
[2] Gen. xvi, 12.
[3] Gen. xxxvii, 25, 27–8.
[4] Pliny, *NH.*, 12, 32. "Thus collectum Sabota camelis convehitur . . . Evehi non potest nisi per Gabanitas itaque et horum regi penditur vectigal. Caput eorum Thomna abest a Gaza nostri litoris in Judaea oppido quadragies et quater centena ac triginta sex millia passuum."
[5] Psalm lxxii, 10, 15; Job i, 5; vi, 19, etc.
[6] Hamdani, ed. Muller, 47, 136, 168. Ibn Hawqal, *Bibl. Geogr. Arab.*, 2, 21.
[7] Maṣ'udi, *Murûj*, 3, 122.

(*b*) *The City of Mecca*

[1] Strabo, 16, 4, 4, 18.
[2] From "taqrish", al-Jihaz (d. A.H. 255) in Brit. Mus. *Or.* 3188, fo. 267.
[3] Maṣ'udi, *Murûj*, 3, 119–20.
[4] Waqidi, 59, 3.
[5] Waqidi, *Ashab*, 58–9. Lammens, *La Mecque*, 257.
[6] Hirschfeld, *New Researches*, 6. Frankel, *Arämäisch. Fremdwörter.*
[7] Lammens, *Les Chrétiens à la Mecque, passim.*
[8] Ibid., p. 229.
[9] Lammens, *La Mecque*, chaps. viii, ix, x, on the financial system of Mecca.

(*c*) *The Trading Caravans*

[1] Strabo, 16, 4, 33. Tabari, *Annales*, 1, 1271.
[2] Ibn Hisham, 432–40.
[3] Hanbal, *Musnad*, 4, 74.
[4] *Aghani*, 20, 137–40.
[5] Qur., 106, 1.
[6] Ibn Hisham, 330.
[7] *Aghani*, 1, 302–3.
[8] Qur., 48, 11–13: 49, 14.
[9] Ibn Hisham, 115.
[10] Ibn Hisham, 119.

CHAPTER XI

EVIDENCE FROM PRE-ISLAMIC RELIGION

(a) *Evidence from Social Conditions*

History shows us a penetration of Arabia by the Egyptians and Akkadians in early times, and this external contact increased as time went on, partly by colonization, but mainly by the development of trade routes by which the merchandise from South Arabia, and imports from India and East Africa, were conveyed to the western world and more particularly to the Byzantine Empire. We have seen scattered references to Byzantines and others who passed down into Arabia, as missionaries, colonists, or commercial agents, and so find indirect suggestions of intercourse with Arabia. This might be endorsed and emphasized by indirect methods if we could recover sufficient evidence about the social life, institutions, etc., of pre-Islamic Arabia, but unfortunately our material is inadequate and unreliable, unreliable especially in the information given by Muslim writers as they, living in a more sophisticated age, were unable to appreciate the features of the "days of ignorance" which postulated a stage of social development entirely different from anything they observed in the life of the community with which they were familiar.

Here and there we get slight suggestions and it is quite possible that a more thorough sifting of the material and the application of scientific methods of comparative sociology might bring more evidence to light. For instance, W. Robertson Smith in his *Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia* (revised ed. 1907) notes that *ba'al* marriage, i.e. that in which the husband is "lord"

over the wife, was a comparatively recent institution in Arabia in the days of the Prophet. The earlier type of marriage, in which the wife remained in her own tribe, retained the children who became members of her totem, and formed only a temporary union which she could dissolve at will, was then passing away and falling into disrepute: "unions of this sort had gradually come to be viewed as discreditable, and the women who practised them seem to have generally been found in inferior classes or less influential tribes . . . a Meccan woman of good birth piqued herself on her chastity; the restraint which was originally imposed on captive women by their lords had come to be accepted by the wife herself as a point of honour" (W. Robertson Smith, op. cit., 167). In fact marriage, as we understand it now, was already fully developed, at least, in the settled communities of the Hijâz, and women who followed the older usage were simply classed as harlots. Now this indicates a very fully developed social order and one far removed from primitive conditions. To us the polygamous union with one husband who is "lord" over his wives may seem barbarous, but in fact it shows the first stage of stable marriage after the group conditions of earlier sexual relations. That this great change had taken place, and that it was a recent change in the Prophet's time, strongly endorses all we have already said about the non-isolation of such centres as Mecca and Medina. That they were now conforming to the social conditions of the civilized empires is not an actual proof of intercourse, but added to other evidence tending in the same direction it goes far to endorse it.

(*b*) *Possible Evidence from Religion*

In other directions we have more definite, though still fragmentary, evidence, and some of this occurs in what can be learned about pre-Islamic Arabian religion, chiefly because the ancient inscriptions and the references in Greek and Latin writers more often refer to this, and some notices are preserved

in Arabian writers, whilst the help of comparative religion enables us to see the bearing of these references and to help them out with some details from existing survivals. The evidence of the inscriptions is very fragmentary and supplies us with little more than the names of deities, mostly of South Arabia: the Greek and Latin references, themselves fragmentary, eke out the inscriptions. In the notices of Arabic writers it appears not only that the material is comparatively late, when all real memory of pagan customs had passed away, but that the mentions preserved were expurgated and revised so as to bring them into conformity with the Qur'an. The orthodox Muslim attitude was that there was nothing worthy of preservation in the "days of ignorance" and so little regard was paid to those times that when the traditionalists came to collect the evidence so as to explain the Qur'an references, it was found to be defective, and they only collected what was wanted to illustrate the Qur'an and what they found was often adapted to serve this purpose better. Thus we are very much in the dark about the early cults of Mecca, though a correct knowledge would greatly help us to understand the earlier portion of the Prophet's ministry. So far, existing survivals have received very inadequate attention, though some notes by Wellhausen on the ceremonies of the pilgrimage show how far a study of these can carry us.

The treatment of all this fragmentary and scattered evidence needs the help of a science of religion based upon comparative study, and this should be treated, not as a theological subject, but as a branch of cultural anthropology, compared with and checked by other branches of cultural anthropology. The last forty years have seen the beginnings of such a science, but as yet its conclusions are so tentative that they can be accepted only with the greatest caution: the confidence and precision with which writers on comparative religion so often lay down general principles must not lead us to suppose

that those principles have been in any sense proved—reference to writers of thirty years ago on the same subject will show that what was then accepted as axiomatic truth is now generally repudiated as rash conjecture. A science of religion is necessary as part of cultural anthropology, and treated on scientific anthropological lines will undoubtedly yield results, to some extent has already done so, only these are at best *probable* conclusions, not *proved* ones.

Amongst these general observations it seems fairly established that in primitive religions deities are not (usually ?) clothed with personal attributes : religious rites are used as a kind of magic for manipulating the forces in nature and so primitive religion appears as ritual rather than doctrine or ethics. The natives of Chota Nagpur are at this stage at the present time [1] : and this seems to have prevailed in the old Roman religion down to a comparatively late period.[2] The speculative theology which deifies the heavenly bodies seems to belong to quite a late stratum of intellectual development. It is, of course, no unusual thing to find several different strata in any religion, mutually inconsistent ideas surviving side by side, for religion is always intensely conservative and a type of thought which is superseded by another can still survive side by side with it. In the case of Arabia it seems that almost every known stratum existed there contemporaneously. We find survivals of ancient Babylonian culture, evidences of Hellenistic thought with highly critical and scientific tendencies, and elements left over from the stone age, all mixed together in the religion, and probably in the whole cultural life, of pre-Islamic Arabia.

(*c*) *Arabian Deities*

To Babylonian influence, in all probability, we may ascribe the worship of the heavenly bodies : indeed star worship seems to be very much a Mesopotamian development, though we are hardly able to say, at our present state of knowledge, that every

sun-myth or star-myth must necessarily trace back to the Tigris–Euphrates valley. Very early, however, it seems that the inhabitants of that valley relied on the movements of the planets and other heavenly bodies to guide them as to the time of inundation on which their agriculture depended, and in the end they came to regard those heavenly bodies as the cause of the inundation and so as the givers of their harvest. Most of these bring us back to the mother-goddess, the principle of fertility, whose worship is characteristic, not of a nomadic tribal people, but of a settled agricultural community. In Arabia special prominence was given to al-'Uzza who was identified with the planet Venus,[1] and to whom Nilus saw the Arabs of Sinai offering a camel sacrifice.[2] Al-'Uzza was one of the three sister deities worshipped at Mecca in the Prophet's time.[3] Ath-Thuraiya, the rain giver, perhaps represents the Pleiades. We know that *Shams* "the sun" (fem.) was worshipped from the evidence of the fairly frequent proper names 'Abdu Shams (later 'Abdu sh-Shams), etc. Probably *Allât* also represents the sun, and this particular deity seems to have been the best known of all the deities of Arabia. Herodotus gives Ἀλίττα as the name which the Arabs applied to Urania: Ἀλίττα and Ὀροτάλ, he says, were the only gods worshipped in Arabia, and the second of these he regards as corresponding to Bacchus.[4] The name *Allât* is fairly frequent in Nabataean inscriptions, e.g. "this sanctuary to the lady Elath",[5] "the priest of Ellath",[6] "temple . . . built to Allath".[7] A Palmyrene inscription distinguishes between Shams and Allath.[8] *Allât* was one of the three deities of the Ka'ba in Qur. 53, 19–20, and was the chief numen of Ta'if near Mecca. In these and other astral deities we see the more cultural development of pre-Islamic Arabian religion, and some evidence about them can be gathered from the references in Greek and Latin writers and from inscriptions: but here, of course, we are faced with the objection that evidence

of this sort only applies to the Arabs who were in contact with the outer world, the Arabs of the trade route and the frontier settlements, and so illustrates only one stratum of ancient Arabian religion, and that the one most affected by alien influences.

Behind these personal deities were local spirits such as *Dhu sh-Sharâ* (*Δουσάρης*) worshipped at Petra,[9] animals such as *Nasr* "the vulture", mentioned in Qur. 71, 23, who appears as *Neshrâ* in the Babylonian Talmud,[10] and absolutely formless and impersonal powers such as *Manîya* or *Manâ* "doom" (cf. *Měni* in Isa., 65, 11) who had a sanctury at Ḥudhail, and in Mecca was partly personified in the feminine *Manât* [11] whose name occurs also in an el-Ḥejra inscription,[12] and so *Gadd* "good luck" [13] whose name appears in the 'Abd el-Jadd of a Yemeni inscription. Obviously these belong to a much earlier type of *numina* than the personified *dii* and *deae* developed under foreign influence.

The Qur'an mentions other deities such as *Wadd*, *Sowa*, *Yaghuth*, and *Ya'uq* which are classed with *Nasr*.[14] *Wadd* means "friendship", *Yaghuth* "the helper", *Ya'uq* "the preserver", and it is very likely that these kindly names, like the Greek *Eumenides*, were given as propitiatory to dreaded numina. For the most part the deities were exorcised and their influence averted, rather than invoked or worshipped in the later sense; the Arabic *tuqa* "piety" properly denotes "being on one's guard against".

Of an older Semitic type is the tree worship and stone worship in which those objects were regarded as the abode of spirits which though thus housed were hardly, if at all, personal in character. The sacred tree figures prominently in Semitic religion and survives in defiance of Islam. Such was the acacia at Nakhla which was identified with al-'Uzza, such in all probability the *Dhât Anwat* or "tree to hang things on" to which the Meccans made an annual visit, and such the tree at

Hudhaibiya mentioned in Qur. 48, 18, which was visited by pilgrims until it was cut down by the Khalif 'Umar.[15] The identification of a tree spirit with a personal deity such as al-'Uzza was obviously a compromise between two different strata of religious thought.

The worship of a monolith (*nusub*, pl. *ansab* = στήλη) as the abode of a numen was the widest spread form of Semitic religion and has a well-known illustration in the stele at Bethel (Baitan) which the Old Testament describes as anointed by Jacob and by him called "the house of God". This upright stone with cup hollows [16] was the earlier type of altar, the "place of slaughter"; but it must be remembered that the patriarchs of Genesis were not primitive people, but had long been in contact with the well-developed cultures of Mesopotamia and Egypt,[17] and so had reached a stage many centuries in advance of the Arabs of Central Arabia in the days of Muhammad. Behind the monolith altar was undoubtedly the monolith deity, the fetish spirit dwelling in the stone, to which Clement of Alexandria refers when he says that "the Arabs worship a stone".[18]

Language itself shows a careful distinction between *watham*, the stone which was the "abode of a deity", and *ṣanam* or carved image. Of the former type was the stone worshipped as al-Lat at Ta'if, the representation of Melcarth of Tyre, of Astarte, of Dusares at Petra, etc.,[19] and we may refer to the second commandment of the decalogue which forbids, not the worship of stones so much as the carving them into graven images which, to the Israelite as to the Arab, was an "innovation". Ibn Hisham says that idolatry was introduced into Mecca by 'Amr b. Lahi from Syria only a short time before Muhammad.[20] The same authority later gives another tradition which ascribes its introduction to Hudhail b. Madraka, but again says that it came from Syria not long before the time of Muhammad.[21] Both these traditions agree in representing idolatry, i.e. the worship of carved images as distinct from monoliths, as of

recent introduction into Arabia and of Syrian origin. This is endorsed by the word *ṣanam* which is a loan-word from the Aramaic *ṣelem* "idol". It seems fairly safe therefore to understand that the use of images was an instance of Syro-Hellenistic culture which had come down the trade route, it was a recent introduction in Mecca in the time of the Prophet and was probably unknown to the Arab community at large.

As a rule ritual throws more light on early ideas of religion than the professed doctrine which is most often an attempt of speculative theology to explain the ritual and so both later in date and peculiar to the more intellectual minority. So far as the ritual of the religion of Mecca is concerned it is important to note that some at least of its features were taken over by Islam, though obviously they have been modified by Muhammad or his early successors, and this modification involves the omission of some features which might have given us the key to the meaning of the ceremonies.

The ritual of Meccan religion centres in the Ka'ba or *Baitullah* "the house of God". With this is connected the *ḥarem* or sacred territory which now appears as dependent on the *ka'ba* and the well *Zem-zem*. Probably the original nucleus was this well for there is nothing else to explain why the sterile valley came to be considered a sacred place. We assume that there was a sacred territory with a sanctuary, not a building or even an enclosure, but simply a sacred area marked out by boundary stones, and within this sacred area a holy well and a treasury or *ka'ba*. This ka'ba, we are told, was rebuilt in Muhammad's time and then, probably for the first time, was roofed over and made a covered house thence, perhaps, deriving the name of *ka'ba* or "cube". The present erection is of much later date, indeed not older than the seventeenth century A.D.

In this treasury were the three goddesses al-'Uzza, al-Lat, and Manat, and these were represented as images, a late innovation of Syrian origin. These three deities are mentioned in

Qur. 53, 19–20; but the Qur'an continues: "What, shall ye have male progeny and god female?"—besides these three goddesses, therefore, there was another deity whom, as the Qur'an suggests, the Meccans regarded as a male and as father of the three (cf. Qur. 52, 29; 16, 59). This supreme father-god was the Allah to whom Muhammad refers in Qur. 29, 65 and 31, 31, where he speaks of the Arabs as calling upon Allah, in 6, 109, where he says that they swore by him, and 2, 61, where he refers to him as creator. Ibn Hisham (loc. cit.) refers to 'Amr b. Lahi as bringing from Syria the image of Hubal, a deity not known in Arabia proper outside Mecca, but mentioned in Nabataean inscriptions.[22] Hubal undoubtedly was a newcomer, but his image was used to represent the older *al-liah* "the one worshipped", the male supreme god of the ka'ba, though we must regard the personification as a late development of the formless and sexless numen of the sanctuary.

(*d*) *The Pilgrimage*

The ritual shows that the older religious ideas upon which the cult of Hubal and the graven images had been superimposed still survived. To us the ritual is chiefly known by the two observances now called the *'umra* or "lesser pilgrimage" and the *ḥajj* or "greater pilgrimage". The former of these connects with the old cult of Mecca but, as Wellhausen has shown, the *ḥajj* is not Meccan at all, though observed in the neighbourhood of Mecca.

The *'umra* is a visit to the ka'ba and to the two hills of Safa and Marwa. It is thus described by A. J. B. Wavell who made the pilgrimage in 1908: "We applied to one of the numerous guides about to conduct us through the necessary ceremonies, the first of which consists in the walk seven times round the Kaaba. Moving across the square to the edge of the depressed platform on which it stands we took our guide's hands and joined the throng surging round it. It was about three o'clock in the

afternoon, the hottest time of the day, and the mosque was comparatively empty. Yet there must have been quite a thousand people going round. Day and night throughout the year it is never quite deserted. The "towaf", as this ceremony is called, would be considered to bring peculiar blessing to anyone fortunate enough to be the only person performing it . . .

"Partly running, partly walking, we made our way round and round, repeating the while a long prayer after our guide. At the end of our seventh circuit we had to kiss the famous 'Hagar-el-aswad', a stone let into the corner of the building about four feet above the ground. A hole in the sable drapery gives access to it, and I was able to notice that it was heavily encased with silver, and that the small part of it exposed is being actually worn away by the kisses of the devout . . .

"We now prayed another two-rukka prayer, and then left the Haram to perform the ceremony called the 'Saa', which consists in running between Safa and Marawa, two small hills about three hundred yards apart. The line joining them runs nearly parallel with the eastern face of the Haram, and the road between them takes in the adjoining street. Backwards and forwards we went, running part of the way as prescribed and repeating another long prayer all the time. It is on account of these prayers that a guide is so convenient, as he knows them all by heart, and so saves the pilgrim the trouble of reading them out of a book or improvising them for himself, which latter might be beyond his capacity." [1]

Here obviously the ritual centres in the stone in the ka'ba and the two hills (stones ?) of Safa and Marwa', and these were perhaps the original *anṣab* worshipped at Mecca. In this connexion we must note the words of Qur. 106, 3, where reference is made to the "worship of the Lord of this house" as one of the functions of the Quraysh. Of the changes made by Muhammad we know one was that he forbade any to make the circuit of the *ka'ba* in a state of nakedness, so that this presumably

was done by the pre-Islamic Arabs, and apparently they did so with hand-clapping, shouting, and singing, for this seems to be implied in his contemptuous reference to the unbelieving Meccans, " their prayers at the house are nothing else than whistling through the fingers, and clapping of hands " (Qur. 8, 35). With this we compare Saul who prophesied naked (1 Sam. xix, 24), and David " leaping and dancing before the Lord " and before the ark when it was brought to Jerusalem (1 Sam. vi, 16). The Hums or guardian clan attached to the ka'ba were its *sadin*, i.e. " custodians ", not priests in the accepted sense. Muhammad called the sacred area the *masjid* (= mosque), which is an obvious rendering of the Aramaic *masgeda*, implying a " place of prayer ".

Quite distinct from the *'umra* was the *ḥajj* which is now the " greater pilgrimage ". It is not directly connected with the ka'ba or with Mecca, though it is now invariably prefaced by the *'umra*. The *ḥajj* is extended over two days and can only be observed on the two appointed days in each year, i.e. the 9th and 10th of the month Dhu l-Ḥijja. On the first day the pilgrims halt at Arafat and kindle lights at Hal, places which are not in the *ḥaram* at all, and the Quraysh and Hums have no special privileges but attend only as ordinary pilgrims. Now there is a sermon on Arafat, but this is probably a Muslim addition. The pilgrims make much noise and cry " labbaika ", repeatedly, a word which has always been a puzzle to philologists, but seems to mean " at thy service ". All proceed to Muzdalifa which is in the haram and here they are joined by the Quraysh and Hums who are not themselves making the pilgrimage. The night is spent at Muzdalifa and before sunrise all proceed to Mina, throwing pebbles at certain heaps of stones on the way. A sacrifice is offered at Mina and with this sacrifice the ḥajj ends. Pilgrims then discard the ihram or pilgrim's garb and are shaved.

This ḥajj is one of the five solemn obligations to be observed by all Muslims and is not discharged by a visit to Mecca and the

ka'ba, and may only be performed on the two appointed days in each year. No doubt it is the same ceremony which is mentioned by Epiphanius[2] as "haggat al bait", "the pilgrimage to the house", though that name is inaccurate in detail as a visit to the Baitullah is not part of the ritual of the ḥajj itself which centres in Arafat, Mina, and Muzdalifa. Now, owing to the Muslim lunar year, the month Dhu l-Ḥijja passes in turn through all the different season, but in the earlier period of Muhammad ministry it fell in the autumn and so corresponded with the feast or "hagg" of the Israelites which took place in the autumn and was known as the "Feast of Tabernacles", itself parallel to the autumn festival observed by other Semitic communities. In ordaining the hours of prayer Muhammad carefully avoided the actual time of sunrise or sunset lest his followers might be led to sun worship, or seem to be adoring the sun, and a similar motive seems to exist in the ordinance that the start from Arafat to Muzdalifa must take place a little *after* sunset, and from Muzdalifa for Mina a little *before* sunrise. It is probable that in pre-Islamic times these observances were at sunrise and sunset, and so the ḥajj was at bottom a solar festival. The preservation of such a festival, with altered meaning, in Islam is not more strange than the observance of a pre-Israelitish spring festival continued as the Passover in the Mosaic law, and as Easter in the Christian Church. The throwing of stones on the road between Muzdalifa and Mina is probably a ritual getting rid of evil and has its parallel in many primitive observances: this is endorsed by the Muslim tradition that its object is the stoning of Satan, whence the common reference to "Satan the stoned".

(*c*) *Infanticide*

One custom of pre-Islamic paganism which has claimed considerable attention in tradition is the alleged custom of putting female infants to death by burying them alive, and we

are given to understand that this revolting custom prevailed extensively until it was suppressed by Muhammad. In three places the Qur'an refers to children being killed by Arabs when they were too poor to support them; thus Qur. 6, 141, "they are lost indeed who kill their children foolishly," Qur. 6, 152, "do not slay your children for fear of poverty," and Qur. 17, 33, "do not kill your children for fear of want." One passage more precisely rebukes the Arabs for their attitude towards unwanted girls, viz. Qur. 16, 60–1: "and when a daughter is announced to one of them his face becomes dark and he is full of anger. He hides himself from the people because of the evil of that which is announced to him. Shall he keep it with disgrace, or bury it in the dust?"

We can understand that infanticide probably did take place in the desert tribes who, at the best of times, can hardly do more than keep body and soul together and amongst whom only the hardiest and the craftiest have the prospect of life: but these passages hardly justify us in attributing to the Arabs the sacrifice of female infants as a regular religious observance. Then, in one passage, Qur. 81, 8–9, we find a statement which may convey something more: "When a female child which has been buried alive shall be asked for what crime she was put to death . . ." The expression occurs in the midst of a poetical description of the last day: "when the wild beasts shall be gathered together and when the sea shall boil . . . when the leaves of the Book shall be unrolled and the heaven stripped away." It is of course open to question whether, in a passage of such poetic diction, a sentence should be taken in a strictly literal sense: anyhow the commentators have decided so to take it and interpret it as meaning that the burial alive of girl infants was an established observance in pre-Islamic Arabia. It is recorded that 'Umar wept when he placed a baby daughter in her grave, that Sa'ṣa'a saved 180 girls from being thus put to death,[1] that Muhammad persuaded the women of Mecca

to promise not to continue the custom,[2] and that it once was general.[3] The credibility of this assertion is rudely attacked by the *Aghani* where the statement is made that the practice of putting female children to death was first introduced by Qays b. 'Asim the Sa'dite, who was a contemporary of Muhammad. The custom was so little known to the Arabs that it had to be explained as a recent innovation.

So far, therefore, as the native Arabic authorities go, they give us little information of value as to pre-Islamic Arabian religion: they had the Qur'an before them, as we have, and they made conjectures as to its meaning without the help of any traditions other than speculative ideas based upon the Qur'an. When tradition commenced the "days of ignorance" were already forgotten and unfamiliar.

From these brief observations on pre-Islamic religion, of which, as we see, so little is yet known to us with any certainty, we seem to have good ground to surmise that foreign influences had been felt, especially in the personification of the beings worshipped and in the introduction of graven images, in days long before Muhammad. This strongly suggests that the alien intercourse which we have considered in the earlier chapters, was not merely a matter of trade and invasion, but had a direct bearing on the life and thought of the Arab people, who thus were not so isolated and untouched as has been commonly supposed.

NOTES TO CHAPTER XI

(*b*) *Possible Evidence from Religion*

[1] Risley, in *Census of India* (1901), I, i, 352 seqq. Calcutta, 1903.
[2] Warde Fowler, *Religious Experience of the Roman People* (1911), 157–64; V. Domaszewski, *Abhandlungen zur römisch. Relig.*, 155 seqq.

(*c*) *Arabian Deities*

[1] 'Uzza = 'Azîz (?).
[2] The Arabs ἄστρῳ δὲ τῷ πρωϊνῷ προσκυνοῦντες: Nilus in *PG.*, 79, 612.
[3] Qur., 53, 19–20.
[4] Hdt., 1, 131; 3, 8.
[5] First cent. inscr. in Sardinia, *CIS.*, 1, 149; Cooke, *NSI.*, 60, p. 158.
[6] Inscr. of A.D. 47, of Bostra, now in Louvre, *CIS.*, 2, 170; Cooke, *NSI.*, 98.
[7] Inscr. of A.D. 65, at Salhad, *CIS.*, 2, 182; Cooke, *NSI.*, 99.
[8] Cooke, *NSI.*, 117, line 6.
[9] Hesychius, *Δουσάρην. τὸν Διόνυσον. Ναβαταῖοι. ὡς φησιν Ἰσίδωρος.*
[10] T. B., *Aboda Zara*, 11*b*.
[11] Qur., 53, 19–20.
[12] מנותן Cooke, *NSI.*, 79, line 5.
[13] Cf. Isaiah, 65, 11.
[14] Qur., 71, 22–3.
[15] Yaqut, 3, 261.
[16] For descr. of stone, cf. Vincent, *Canaan*, 96 seqq., 102 seqq.
[17] Gen. xi, 28, etc.; Gen. xii, 14, etc.
[18] Clement Alexand., *Protrep.*, 4, 46.
[19] Al-Lat in Yaqut, 4, 235; Qazwini, 2, 65. Melcarth in Herodot, 2, 44. Astarte in Tacitus, *Hist.*, 2, 2.
[20] Ibn Hisham, *Sîra* (Egyptian edit.), 27.
[21] Ibid., 28.
[22] Cf. Cooke, *NSI.*, 80 = *CIS.*, 2, 198; inscr. of B.C. or A.D. 1, at el-Hejra, line 8, חבלן.

(*d*) *The Pilgrimage*

[1] Wavell, *A modern pilgrim in Mecca*, 132–3.
[2] Epiphanius, *Haeres*, 51, 24.

(*e*) *Infanticide*

[1] Kamil, p. 679.
[2] Ibn al-Athir (Bulaq edit.), ii, 105.
[3] Maidani, in Freytag, *Arab. Proverb.*, ii, 16.

CHAPTER XII

THE BEGINNING OF THE PROPHET'S MINISTRY

(a) *Political State of West Asia at the Beginning of the Prophet's Ministry*

For some centuries before the appearance of Islam the central factor in the politics of what we now call the " Near East " was the constant warfare between the empires of Persia and Byzantium, and this, to a large extent, was fought out in Arabia. The products of India and further Asia as well as those of Arabia itself had become necessary to Byzantium and thus Persia was able to bring economic pressure to bear, and to do this more effectually, endeavoured to secure a strong hold on Arabia, and especially on South Arabia, which was the weakest point in the economic barrier designed to cut off Oriental products from the Byzantine markets.

The Persian king Khusraw Anushirwan (531–79) aimed at the conquest of Byzantium (in 540), but Justinian made terms. As so often happened, however, the truce arranged between the two empires was not recognized by the border Arabs. The Ghassanid leader Khalid invaded the domains of Mundhir of Hira, and of this Khusraw made formal complaint to the Byzantine emperor, but received no reply. He then invaded the imperial dominions, sacked Aleppo, Emesa, and other towns, and threatened to advance into Syria. At this the Byzantines asked for terms, and peace was made on the condition that Khusraw was left in possession of the towns he had seized. One result of this expedition was that the Persians obtained a very large number of Greek captives, amongst whom they were able to count many engineers, physicians, and skilled

craftsmen, whom they especially aimed at capturing. In fact Khusraw, though warring against Byzantium, was an ardent admirer of Greek civilization and did his utmost to introduce Greek science and arts into Persia. Land (*Anecd. Syriaca*, iv, 1–30) gives a translation of Aristotle's logic made by Paul of Basra, metropolitan of Nisibis, which he dedicated to Khusraw, implying that the King of Kings was interested in Greek philosophy. Together with these pro-Greek feelings Khusraw showed marked favour towards the Christians, the more so because the Christian clergy generally supplied the medical attendants of the court and these made a very considerable *harim* influence. This was somewhat checked in 551 by the king's son Anushazad himself turning Christian. The king banished him to Beit Lapat, but that only left the prince free to raise a rebellion which soon assumed formidable proportions and caused great anxiety. At first Khusraw prepared to suppress it by force, but was induced to entrust the matter to the Christian bishop Maraba who, by moral suasion, induced the rebels to lay down arms. It seems that Anushazad's revolt was very largely a Christian rising and revealed Christianity as a force formidable to the State and very much pro-Byzantine in its political outlook. Up to this time the principal Christian community in Persia had been the Nestorian Church, but under Khusraw, chiefly court intrigue led by Monophysite medical clergy, the Monophysites recently reorganized by Ya'qub Burdeana, replaced it as the leading faction of Persian Christianity[1] and they, though politically opposed to the Byzantine court, were much more Greek in character and interests than the orientalized Nestorians. Under Khusraw, therefore, we may say that Persia showed itself politically superior to Byzantium, but by the course of peaceful penetration Byzantine culture was sapping the foundations of Persian civilization.

No formal truce gave even temporary relief to the rivalry, mainly economic, between Persia and Byzantium in South

Arabia where Abyssinia was in league with Byzantium. In 522 the Abyssinians had invaded and conquered Yemen, though apparently they never penetrated far inland. But Abyssinian rule was unpopular and the Arabs were always ready to play off one power against the other for their own ends. About 570 Khusraw extended Persian power into Yemen and drove out the Abyssinians, an expedition which tradition ascribes to an invitation given by the Yemenites to the Persian king,[2] and this seems to be in all respects probable.

Khusraw died in 579 but his son Hurmizd IV (579–90) continued his father's policy. His general Bahram revolted and declared the crown prince Khusraw Parwiz king and as a result Hurmizd was deposed in 590. Very soon, however, Bahram found that he had made a mistake: Parwiz had played on his ambitions and used him as a tool, but now that the rising was successful blamed Bahram for the revolt and disowned him. But Bahram had the army behind him and Khusraw Parwiz was obliged to flee. The fugitive at once took refuge in Syria and sent an appeal for help to the emperor Maurice who was then ruling in Byzantium. By the orders of Maurice a Byzantine force was assigned to assist Khusraw Parwiz, who thus returned to Persia at the head of a Greek army and by it was placed firmly on the throne. Thus for the moment Persia was bound to Byzantium and the King of Kings was dependent on Byzantine support.

But circumstances soon put an end to these relations. In 602 the Byzantine army revolted, deposed Maurice, and elected Phocas as emperor. Khusraw Parwiz at once declared himself ready to avenge his late ally Maurice and in 604 formally declared war against Byzantium. In 609 he took the hitherto impregnable fortress of Edessa and from this time onwards carried on an invasion which was unchecked for more than ten years. The Emperor Heraclius, who replaced Phocas in 610, was unable for some time to offer any effective resistance. In 611 the

Persians invaded Syria, reaching Damascus in 613. In 614 they reduced Palestine and carried off the relic of the True Cross which was the most treasured possession of the basilica there. In 616 they invaded Egypt and in the course of the same year spread to Asia Minor. It was not until 621 that Heraclius was able to assemble sufficient forces to take the field, and it was in the following year, that in which Muhammad migrated from Mecca to Medina, that he recovered Asia Minor. In 623 he commenced a campaign which lasted some three years in the course of which he advanced through Armenia and so invaded Persia from the rear, thus compelling Khusraw Parwiz to recall his armies. The Byzantines were able to occupy the royal city of Dastgerd and the Persians had great difficulty in recovering territory from the Greeks. In this war, which was followed with great interest by the Arabs, Muhammad was definitely pro-Byzantine and in this shows the prevailing tone of Mecca, and shows in the Qur'an his delight at the victories of Heraclius over the Persians.[3]

The reverses of 623–5 were very bitter to Khusraw Parwiz, who vented his anger on the Christians whom he regarded, probably not without good cause, as favourably disposed towards his enemies. Amongst others he attacked Yazdin, the wealthy farmer-general of the revenues, for the Christians of Greek education were not only the leading physicians and engineers, but formed the bulk of the higher grade of the civil service. Perhaps in this case the king's attention was especially turned to the great wealth amassed by Yazdin, whose methods must have been somewhat suspect. At any rate Yazdin was put to death and his property confiscated. At this his two sons revolted and declared the prince Sheroe king. Khusraw Parwiz was deposed and put to death and Sheroe or Qawad II became king in 628. We may suppose that there were deeper motives at work in this revolution: probably Khusraw's campaigns, victorious and brilliant as they were, may have been very burden-

some to the country and probably public opinion had turned against him when those campaigns brought defeat and reverse. At that time, it is clear, the Christians were not only themselves a formidable community in Persia, but, we find, they were in alliance with the rising power of Islam which already had a hold in Hira.[4]

Sheroe celebrated his accession by cutting off the right hand of each of the two sons of Yazdin and throwing them into prison. After a reign of eight months the king fell ill and died. He was succeeded by Ardeshir, a minor, who was soon deposed as incompetent, and he by Shehrabraz, a descendant of Khusraw Parwiz but not in the direct line of the succession and so unable to obtain complete recognition, for the moral weight of the Persian king rested mainly on his strictly legitimist descent whereby the soul of the ancient kings was believed to be incarnate in the sovereign.

At this time there was a Persian noble named Farrukhan serving in the Byzantine army. He was permitted to lead a Byzantine force into Persia, took Seleucia, executed Yazdin's sons who were in prison there, and assumed the crown as the avenger of the murdered Khusraw Parwiz. Byzantine help he rewarded by making arrangements for the restoration of the True Cross. But after forty days he was murdered by his guard and his body hacked in pieces by the populace. A usurper not of royal blood was too great a violation of Persian prejudice.

At his death (in 630) the crown passed to Boran or Parandokht, sister of Sheroe, who made peace with Byzantium and is usually credited wfth the restoration of the True Cross: probably it was not actually delivered into Byzantine hands until after the death of Farrukhan.

Boran, however, died in 631 and no less than six sovereigns ascended the throne within the next few months, raised to the royal office by the guards and deposed as soon as found

unsatisfactory, a state of semi-anarchy which marked the rapid decline of the Sasanid monarchy and goes far to explain its sudden collapse when attacked by the Muslims. Of these short-lived princes Khushensade reigned only one month and was succeeded by Boran's sister Azernudokht : she was soon followed by Kesra who was shortly afterwards put to death : the next king was Khorzad Khusraw, Sheroe's brother, who was deposed and executed : then Firuz was crowned but immediately deposed as he uttered words of evil omen at his coronation. After some difficulty in finding a suitable prince of royal blood, but at length Yazdgerd II, a descendant of Khusraw Anushirwan, was selected and he seems to have been a man of some ability, but the Sasanids were now in their decadence, the dynasty never recovered the disorders which followed Khusraw Parwiz's reverses, and it was Yazdgerd's lot to make a fruitless effort to stem the tide of Muslim invasion, to suffer defeat at the hands of the Arabs, and to live out the residue of his life in the distant province of Khurasan. Thus the long duel between Persia and Byzantium ended in the downfall of Persia before a third power, the newly established khalifate.

(*b*) *Sources for the Life of the Prophet*

It is extremely important for us to estimate the historical value of the material available for the biography of Muhammad, material to which we have already had to refer on more than one occasion and that from which we would naturally expect to obtain some idea of the Arabia which he found already in existence.

The principal authority for the life of the Prophet Muhammad is the *Sira* composed by Abu 'Abdullah Muhammad Ibn Ishaq (d. 150–1 or 152 = A.D. 767–8). He was a grandson of Yasar who in A.H. 12 (= A.D. 633) had been captured in the church of 'Ayn at-Yamar in 'Iraq and brought to Medina, where he became a client of the tribe of 'Abdullah b. Qays. Ibn Ishaq

was born and educated in Medina where he was the contemporary of the Qadi Malik b. Anas, the first compiler of traditions and the founder of a juristic school. Ibn Ishaq himself also was a collector of traditions and devoted himself especially to those which described the person and life of the Prophet, so that he was a worker in a subject which at that time and place was receiving much attention, although the study of traditions had not yet developed the critical methods which took a definite form two generations later. It is important to note that Malik b. Anas, who was a pioneer in that task of criticism, strongly disapproved of Ibn Ishaq and charged him with Shi'ite, i.e. heretical, tendencies and with being an inventor of legends. On account of this official disapproval, perhaps, Ibn Ishaq left Medina and went to Egypt, then to 'Iraq. He was one of the scholars invited to Baghdad by the khalif al-Mansûr (A.H. 137–59 = A.D. 754–75) and there he compiled a biography of the Prophet under Abbasid patronage. At that time the Abbasid dynasty had been only recently established, Syria was attached to the deposed 'Umayyad dynasty, and the ruling khalifs were still in fear of their dispossessed rivals and persecuting any members of their family who fell into their power: in such circumstances we can understand that an author writing under court patronage was more or less compelled to discredit the 'Umayyads and eulogize the 'Abbasids whenever opportunity served. In the *Sîra* emphasis is laid upon two rival parties in Mecca in the Prophet's life-time; one of these, the Hashimites, to which he himself belonged is described as well disposed and friendly towards him, the other, the 'Umayyads, were for the most part hostile and a great deal is made of the opposition he received from enemies belonging to that faction. The 'Abbasids claimed descent from the Hashimites, the 'Umayyad khalifs were descended from the 'Umayyad faction of Mecca. Obviously there was a strong political motive to discredit the 'Umayyads as much as possible and to exalt their rivals and we

must discount this political animus which shows itself on more than one occasion.

The biography of the Prophet was put together in two, or perhaps three, works, (i) the *Kitâb al-Mubtada'* (*Fihrist*, 92) which is cited by Adi as the *Mubtada' al-Khalq* (Ibn Hishâm ed. Wüstenfeld, II, viii, line 23) and by Halabi as *Kitâb al-Mabda' wa-Qiṣaṣ al-Anbiya'* (Halabi: *as-Sîra*, ii, 235), (ii) the *Kitâb al-Maghâzî*, alleged to exist in the Koprülü Madrasa in Stambul (Deftar No. 1140), but this is now proved to be a copy of Ibn Hisham (cf. Horovitz in *Mitt. der Sem. f. Or. Sprach.*, X. *Westas. Stud.*, 14), and (iii) *Kitâb Sîrat Rasûli-llâh*, the biography of the Apostle of God which may have been a separate work or may have been a term for the whole of which the two preceding were parts. None of Ibn Ishaq's work is now extant in its original form though it was quoted by Mawardi (d. A.D 1086) and was evidently accessible in his day.

The *Sîra* of Ibn I'shaq had been preserved in a recension by Abu Muhammad 'Abdu-l-Malik Ibn Hishâm b. Aiyub al-Ḥimyarî al-Basrî, commonly known as Ibn Hishâm (d. 213 or 218 = 828 or 833) whose work is known as *Kitâb Sîrat Rasûli-llâh* (ed. F. Wüstenfeld, Göttingen, 1858–60, reprinted Bulaq, 1295, this is cited as the "Egyptian edition", translated by G. Weil, Stuttgart, 1864). It claims to be a revised edition but is in fact an expurgated text which shows suppressions and alterations due to the theological tendencies of the time, e.g. it omits any reference to Muhammad's temporary lapse into idolatry which Tabari cites from Ibn Ishaq. It only remains to state that Ibn Hishâm's text received its present form in the fourth century of the Hijra (A.D. tenth century) when it was revised by the Wazir al-Maghribi. Of course the tendency to soften or omit incidents which do not redound to the credit of the subject of the biography is common in dealing with a religious leader when his character has been idealized by the lapse of time and by the reverence of his disciples. This occurs

in the biographies of St. Francis of Assissi as given in the first and second lives by Thomas of Celano contrasted with the later life written by St. Bonaventure: so probably in the gospel ascribed to St. Mark contrasted with the later gospel which bears the name of St. Matthew: and in the early suppressed history of the Bab, the second " New History " which afterwards fell into neglect, and the third *Maqala-i-Shakṣi Sayyaḥ* which became the official form accepted by the Babists (cf. Browne: *Materials for the Study of the Babi Religion*).

The next chief authority for the life of the Prophet is the *Kitâb al-Maghazi* of Abu 'Abdullah Muhammad ibn 'Umar al-Wâqîdî (cited as *al-Wâqîdî*, b. 747, d. A.D. 823), who also was educated at Madina and, invited to Baghdad by the Barmakid Yahya b. Khalid, wrote under 'Abbasid influences. Of this an imperfect edition was published by Von Kremer (A. v. Kremer: *History of Muhammad's Campaigns by Aboo Abdullah Mohammad bin Omar al-Wakidy*, in Bibl. Indica, Calcutta, 1856) and an abridged (German) translation of a better copy was published by Wellhausen (*Muhammad in Medina, das ist Vakidis Kitab al Maghazi*, Berlin, 1882). The real value of al-Wâqidi's work lies in the fact that the author cites the *Sîra* of Ibn Isḥaq in the form prior to Ibn Ḥishâm's revision, thus enabling us to diagnose the " tendencies " which influenced Ibn Ḥishâm and to discount the corrections he made.

The third authority is the *Kitâb at-Tabaqat al-Kabir* of Abu Abdullah Muhammad b. Sa'd b. Mani' az-Zuhri (cited as Ibn Sa'd, d. 230 = 844) who was al-Wâqîdî's secretary. The fifteen volumes of the *Tabaqat* contain the lives of Muhammad, the early Companions, and the Khalifs down to his own time. An edition of Ibn Sa'd has been published in nine volumes, vol. i, Theil, 1st ed., Mittwoch, 1905, Theil, 2nd ed., Mittwoch, u. Sachau, 1911; vol. ii, Theil, 1st ed., Horvitz, 1909, Theil, 2nd ed., Schwally, 1912—these two volumes cover the Prophet's biography.

The general history of Abu Ja'far Muhammad b. Jarir at-Tabari (d. 310 = 922) contains, in its earlier portion, an account of the Prophet's life drawn from the older text of Ibn Ishaq but expanded with later accretions. The earlier part of the history is for the most part extant only in a Persian translation by Abu l-Fadl al-Bal ami but Dr. Sprenger discovered an Arabic fragment (10 pp.) at Lucknow and this is incorporated in the Leyden edition (*Annales auctore . . . at-Tabari*, ed. de Goeje, Leyden, 1879). About two-thirds of at-Tabari's account of the life of the Prophet consists of extracts from Ibn Ishaq and about one-third is derived from sources which do not appear to be of primary value.

A very much later life, no more than a compilation from the authorities already mentioned, was composed by Isma'il b. 'Ali b. Muhammad Abu l-Feḍa (b. 672 = 1273, d. 732 = 1331). It was this late and inferior authority which was the first source known to the West and served as the basis of the older European accounts of Muhammad. " Abu l-Feda is referred to as the chief authority perhaps for the last time by T. Wright, *Christianity in Arabia*," says Margoliouth (D. S. Margoliouth : *Mohammad*, London, 1905, p. iii, foot-note), but this late authority is again used as though it were our chief historical source by Servier : *Psychology of the Musulman*, 1922, ch. iv.

Many lives of Muhammad are in circulation amongst Muslims, but these are essentially works intended for edification and make no claim to any critical character. The life of the Prophet forms no part of Muslim theological study and is left entirely to those who wrote simply for the purpose of quickening devotion. It might be argued that this shows a true instinct as it lays emphasis upon the Prophet's message rather than upon his person. But Islam suffers from this neglect as the tendency is now to explain a religion by tracing and criticizing its historical evolution and in Islam the material available for this purpose is of somewhat inferior character and hardly worthy of the high

standard attained by the work done in speculative theology and philosophy. In no sense can a critical survey of the records of the Prophet's life be regarded as an attack upon the religion of Islam as the biographical details do not form part of the Muslim creed but merely relate the circumstances in which that creed took form.

It is obvious that the *Sîra*, whether in the redaction of Ibn Hishâm or in the citations made by at-Tabari or other historians cannot be regarded as reliable for any of the events prior to the Hijra. The life of Muhammad subsequent to the migration to Medina is within the sphere of authentic history and must be so treated, and his teaching, as well in the earlier Mecca *Suras* as in the later Medina ones, must be accepted as an accurate presentation of what he actually did teach, but all Arabic material dealing with the history of Arabia before the year 622 must be accepted with great caution. In so far as it deals with the history of the kingdom of Himyar it seems to be correct in general outline, though inaccurate in chronology, and needs to be checked and corrected by independent external evidence, the references of Greek and Roman writers, the references in Syriac and Abyssinian historical and hagiographical records, and the monuments, inscriptions, and other antiquities found in South Arabia. So far as pre-Himyaritic history is concerned the Arabic writers hardly help us at all, and it is only from the scattered material in Egyptian, Akkadian, Greek, and Latin records, and extant antiquities, that we can derive any material for the reconstruction of such history. Islam became cosmopolitan at a very early stage and neither the Arabs settled in Syria, 'Iraq, Egypt, Persia, or North Africa, nor the native converts of those parts, retained any record or tradition of the days of ignorance before the Hijra, whilst the Arabs of Arabia itself seem to have been quite indifferent to history. The traditions of Islam, the South Arabian Saga, and the diwans of early poetry all took shape in the early

'Abbasid period, and though undoubtedly based on some traditional knowledge, were compiled by those who were influenced by very strongly marked political, racial, and religious prejudices, so that the extant material in each case shows a definite " tendency " for which allowance must be made and which renders the checks obtained from independent external authorities of extreme importance. As a rule European writers, dealing with pre-Islamic history, have been led by the Arabic authorities to suppose that early Arabia had its own history in a secluded area which was entirely segregated from the rest of the world, and this has led to an inaccurate picture and to mistaken conclusions. By utilizing external sources we discover that Arabia in pre-Islamic times was not so self-centred nor so self-contained, indeed to a great measure its later segregation seems largely due to the influence of Islam in 'Abbasid and subsequent times, and that consequently the religion of Islam was not evolved amongst remote tribes with only very slight contact with the outside world, but in the midst of the general tide of West Asiatic civilization. Nor was the Arabic language a dialect preserved in its pristine purity by the remoteness of the tribes which used it, but must have been to some considerable extent affected by numerous contacts, whilst preserving in its basis traces of an older culture-spread which extended from the Tigris to East Africa.

NOTES TO CHAPTER XII

(*a*) *Political State of West Asia*

[1] After discussion (described in Bar Hebraeus, *Chron. Eccles.*, ii, 91–5) the king desired the Nestorian Catholicos to agree with other Christian people, " as he did not agree he was expelled from Seleucia and went to Adorbigan. The great church of the Nestorians near the royal palace was destroyed, and a church built for the orthodox " (i.e. the Monophysites). Bar. Heb., *Chron. Eccles.*, ii, 95.

[2] Tabari, *Annales*, i, 946, etc.

[3] Qur. 30. The Greeks temporarily checked, they will soon defeat the Persians by the help of God. But the tone changed when Heraclius made himself master of Syria, including the Arabs there, and in Qur. 48, the Prophet calls on the Arabs to unite against Heraclius. The Arabs were unwilling to undertake the risk (Qur. 9, 37–8), but made a demonstration at Tabuk and then retired to Medina.

[4] Bar Hebraeus, *Chron. Eccl.*, ii, 115–17. " At that time Muhammad the prophet of the Tayyi (i.e. Arabs) became famous. There was then a prince of the believing Nigraniyi of the desert, his name was Sa'id. He taking gifts and presents, together with their bishop Yeshu', went and offered them to Muhammad and obtained from him a treaty regarding the Christians, that the Tayyi would protect them from all injury, not compel them to go to war, nor to change their laws and customs."

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